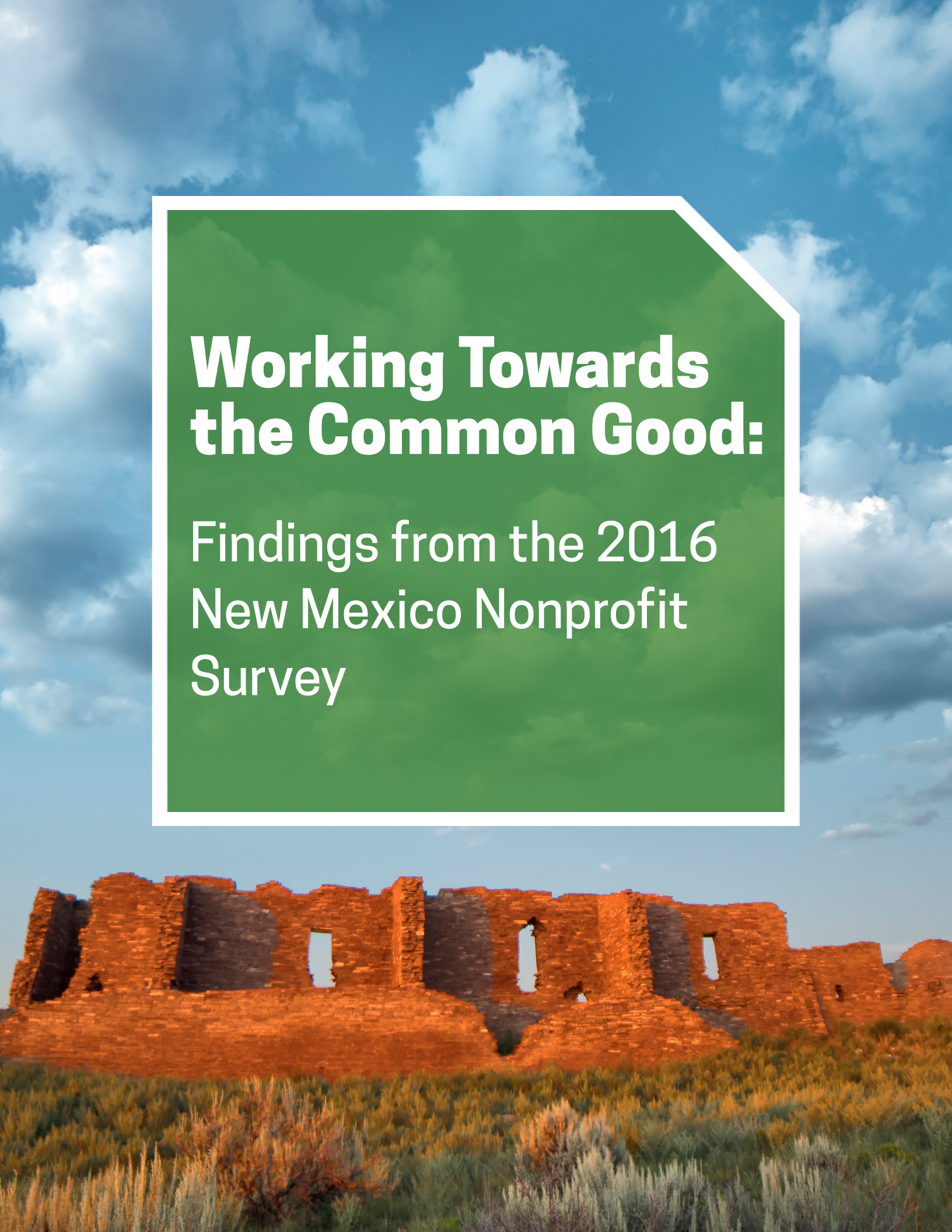


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of dry, yellowish-brown grass and some small, dark shrubs. In the middle ground, there are the ruins of an ancient stone building, likely a Puebloan structure, with several rectangular openings that were once windows. The ruins are made of reddish-brown adobe. The sky above is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. A large, green, rounded rectangular box with a white border is superimposed over the upper half of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

Working Towards the Common Good:

Findings from the 2016
New Mexico Nonprofit
Survey



Building Movement Project

The Building Movement Project (BMP) works 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 several years, the Building Movement Project has partnered with nonprofit organizations in New Mexico to strengthen relationships across organizing, advocacy, and direct service groups by convening, training, and surveying organizations in the state. Through this wide range of activities, BMP has worked to connect nonprofit groups and leaders building a shared voice for New Mexico's vulnerable children, families, and workers.

Acknowledgments

This report was written by Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, BMP's Co-Director, and Nhan Truong, PhD, Research Associate at the Building Movement Project. In addition, Kun Huang, PhD, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Master of Health Administration Program at the University of New Mexico School of Public Administration, developed the social network analysis and maps included in this report. David W. Broudy, MPH, PhD, took the lead on analyzing the extensive survey data. The rest of the BMP team of national staff—Frances Kunreuther, Co-Director and Noelia Mann, Communications and Operations Coordinator—and Albuquerque-based capacity builders—Alicia Lueras Maldonado and Leah Steimel—provided invaluable support on the development of this report and were crucial to outreach to survey respondents.

The Building Movement Project is grateful for the guidance of our New Mexico advisory committee: Jenny Metzler from Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, Inc., Annie Sanchez from Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Andrea Plaza from Encuentro, Monica Cordova from Funder Collaborative for Youth Organizing, Adrian Pedroza from Partnership for Community Action, Ona Porter from Prosperity Works, Julie Radoslovich from South Valley Academy, Javier Benavidez from SouthWest Organizing Project, Adriann Barboa from Strong Families New Mexico, and Claudia Medina from the UNM Office for Community Health.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation generously supports the Building Movement Project's overall work in New Mexico, including this fourth year of surveying organizations in the state.

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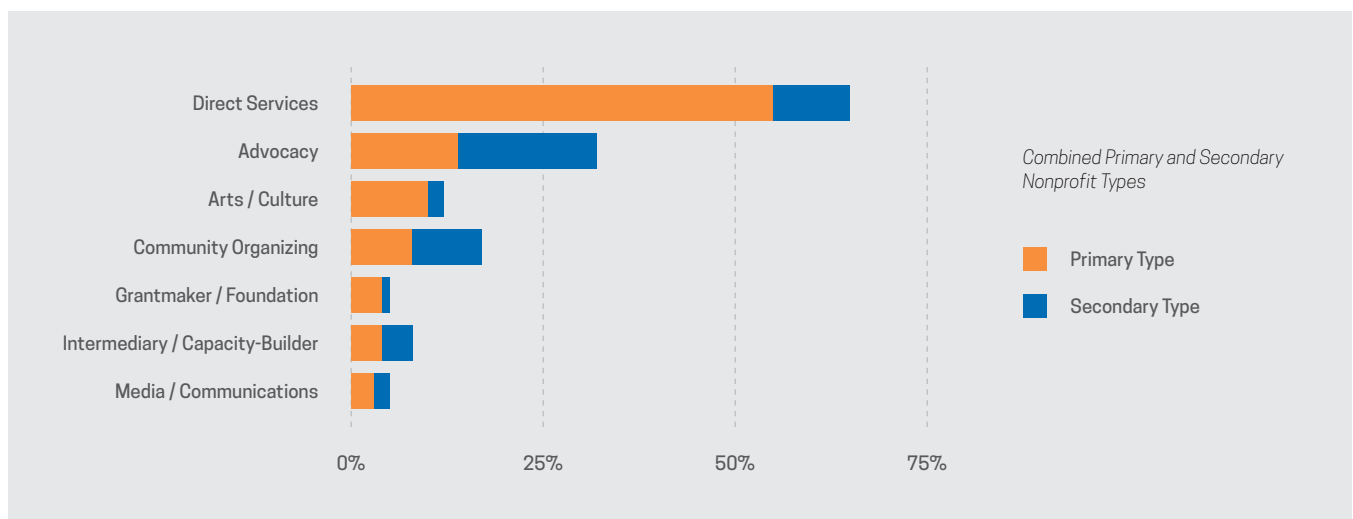
Executive Summary

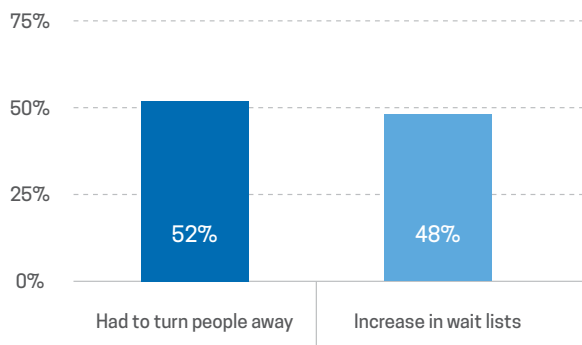
FOR THE FOURTH YEAR, the Building Movement Project (BMP) and partner organizations in New Mexico surveyed the state's nonprofit organizations. This report analyzes the responses of 295 nonprofit organizations that participated in the survey effort. The results from 2016 reconfirmed that organizations 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 foreclosure prevention to workforce development, from therapeutic horsemanship for veterans to protecting the natural habitats of the state's birds of prey. 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 policy change.

Key Findings

The participants in the 2016 survey represent a range of nonprofit organizations across the state of New Mexico, but there were some important commonalities that emerged from the survey findings:

- **The Nonprofit Sector is Diverse.** The 2016 survey asked respondents to identify a primary and secondary nonprofit type, out of a list of seven organizational categories. Direct service groups are by far the majority of surveyed organizations, but many organizations focus on making social change through advocacy. Organizations tend to focus on the state's most vulnerable populations, especially individuals living near or below the poverty line, as well as children, youth and families.
- **Organizations Face Deep Financial Woes.** Regardless of the size of a nonprofit's budget, most organizations reported concerns about funding. Decreases in funding have direct impacts on the ability of organizations to meet the needs of clients, and many direct service providers reported having to turn away people looking for help.
- **Organizations Collaborate.** The survey asked organizations about both their involvement in coalitions and their partnerships with specific organizations. As with previous years, the data revealed organizations are involved in coalitions, and there is a robust and interconnected network of partner organizations that communicate frequently and have high levels of trust. In addition, this year's survey showed that many organizations have strong cross-sector partnerships with government and other institutions.





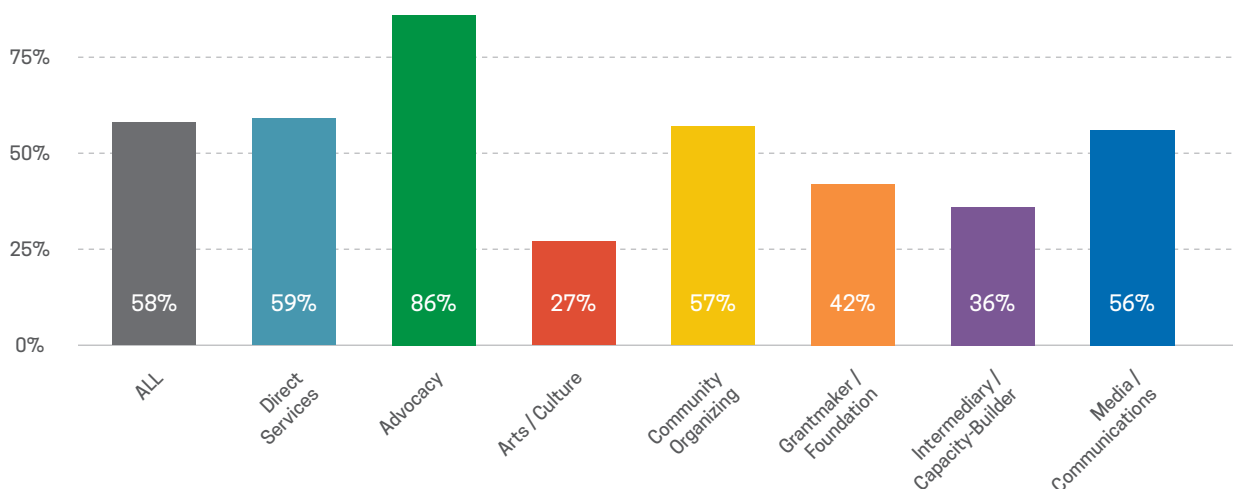
Direct Service Providers Report Turning People Away and Growing Wait Lists

- **Uneven Participation in Advocacy Efforts.** A slight majority of survey respondents reported that their organizations engaged in advocacy. However, there is the potential for more groups to participate in systems change work, particularly since many of the organizations reported that they did not do advocacy due to constraints on their time or funding. Also, education and training geared to nonprofit leaders would help dispel the false belief held by a number of organizations that advocacy is “not permitted by 501(c) status requirements.”
- **Valuing the Voice of the Community.** Organizations in New Mexico gather feedback from their constituents and engage their communities in a variety of ways. Responses to an open-ended question about “underlying issues” revealed that organizations have a broad range of views on the systemic and structural factors that lead people to seek help from nonprofit organizations.

Recommendations

To continue building on the influence, connectivity, and strengths of nonprofit organizations in New Mexico, we offer three recommendations:

- 1. Set Ambitious and Aligned Goals.** To get the most out of the robust network of interrelated nonprofits in New Mexico, organizations should lean into partnerships and coalitions that involve joint advocacy around a vision for big change in the state.
- 2. Advocate With and For Those with the Most at Stake.** This year’s survey showed that many organizations not only engage in advocacy but involve their clients in that work and in the governing of their organizations. These efforts, along with other leadership development strategies, can help ensure that organizations contribute to change from the bottom up.
- 3. Risk Shifting the Paradigm.** This year, the survey asked respondents about the “underlying causes” of social problems. The wide range of responses revealed that there are rich discussions to be had among nonprofit leaders in New Mexico, and greater understanding of organizational perspectives on these issues is often foundational to relationship building and partnership.



Advocacy Participation by Primary Nonprofit Type



INTRODUCTION

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR, the Building Movement Project (BMP) and partner organizations in New Mexico surveyed the state's nonprofit organizations on how they support their communities, tackle the most pressing issues in the state, and work collectively—as a sector—to make lasting change for all New Mexicans.¹ This year's report continues to refine and deepen the use of social network analysis methods to both understand and visualize the ways that nonprofit organizations work in partnerships to address issues that are bigger than any single organization can tackle alone. Also, the 2016 survey gathered more detailed information on the type of work organizations do, including new questions on the capacity challenges facing nonprofits, and how organizations are engaging their constituents and communities.

This report consists of seven main sections:

- 1. Diverse Nonprofits, Shared Challenges** provides an overview of the range of organizations that took part in the survey, how they work to address the needs of the clients and communities they serve, as well as the organizational challenges faced by the state's nonprofits;
- 2. Weathering the Financial Storm** digs into the budgetary and funding challenges faced by non-profits in New Mexico;
- 3. Working in Coalitions** explores the reasons that nonprofits join—and how they engage in—coalitions;
- 4. Pushing for Broader Change** examines how and why nonprofits engage in advocacy;
- 5. Supporting the Voice and Power of Constituents** explores new questions that were added to this year's survey about client feedback and community engagement;
- 6. Networks and Partnerships** uses social network analysis methodologies to provide an in-depth look at the connections and relationships between nonprofits; and
- 7. Building Nonprofit Power to Make Change** offers recommendations for how to help New Mexico's nonprofits continue to increase their impact.



Methodology

The 2016 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey was an on-line survey that launched on December 1, 2016, and closed on January 22, 2017. The link to the survey was distributed, with the help of BMP's New Mexico based partners, to email lists of individuals working in nonprofits, and through frequent promotion on social media. A copy of the survey tool is available on BMP's website.²

Of the 392 individuals who started the survey, 317 participants completed it. Since the survey asked for one respondent for each organization, several responses were eliminated to remove duplicate responses from within an organization, leaving a total of 295 responses from representatives of distinct nonprofit organizations working in the state of New Mexico.



Photo Credit: Ron Cogswell (flickr/22711505@N05)



DIVERSE NONPROFITS, SHARED CHALLENGES

AS WITH THE 2014 AND 2015 SURVEYS, the results from 2016 highlight the variety of ways that nonprofit organizations address the immediate needs of New Mexicans and work together to promote the common good in the state. Organizations that completed the survey reported doing everything from foreclosure prevention to outdoor education; from translation and interpretation services to promoting the full inclusion, participation and human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; from therapeutic horsemanship for veterans to protecting the natural habitats of the state's birds of prey.

Nonprofit type. The 2016 survey asked respondents to identify with one of seven organizational categories; (1) direct services, (2) advocacy, (3) arts / culture, (4) community organizing, (5) grantmaker / foundation, (6) intermediary / capacity-builder, (7) media / communications. *Figure 1* shows the primary nonprofit type that responding organizations identified with.

This year's survey allowed respondents to also select a secondary category from the same list of seven nonprofit types. Two-thirds (64%) of respondents took advantage of this opportunity. *Figure 2* shows the combined primary and secondary nonprofit types, revealing that 65% of the total sample of responding organizations identified as direct service groups (similar to last year's rate of 70%). Also,

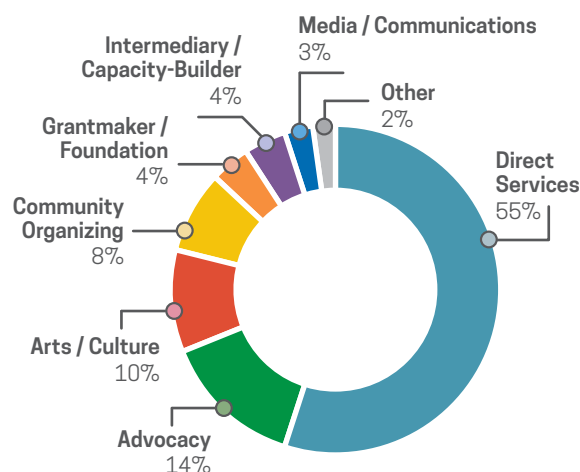


Figure 1. Primary Nonprofit Types

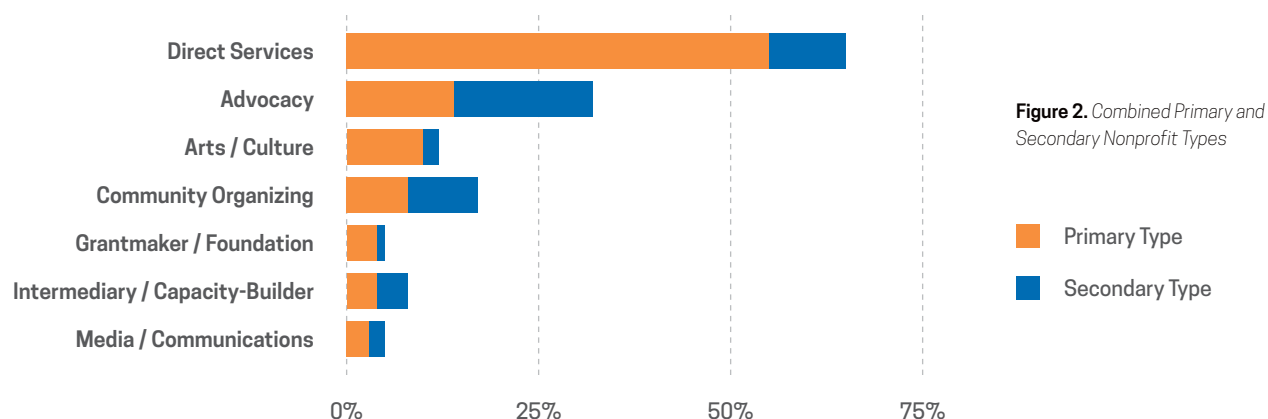


Figure 2. Combined Primary and Secondary Nonprofit Types



one-third of organizations (33%) identified with advocacy when the primary and secondary categories were combined, which is more than double the percentage of groups who identified advocacy as their primary organizational category.

Taking a closer look at the combination of primary and secondary nonprofit types; one quarter (26%) of organizations who primarily identified as direct service organizations also identified “advocacy” as their secondary nonprofit type. Among advocacy organizations, more than a third (35%) selected community organizing as their secondary type. In this year’s survey, the number of nonprofits who primarily identified as arts / culture organizations (10%) outnumbered community organizing groups (8%), but when the primary and secondary categories were combined, there were more groups engaging in organizing (17%, compared to 12%). The vast majority of community organizing groups selected a second nonprofit type, with 45% identifying with advocacy and 30% selecting direct services. In contrast, 60% of arts / culture organizations chose a secondary category, with 37% of arts and culture groups choosing “direct services.”

The distinction may be between organizations that use artistic and cultural expression as a vehicle for delivering services that help clients—such as art education and drama therapy—and nonprofits that represent professional artists, like theater companies and art museums.

Geographic scope. The surveyed organizations collectively work in all 33 New Mexican counties. Nearly two-thirds of organizations (64%) describe their work as spanning multiple counties, the entire state of New Mexico, or even multiple states (see *Figure 3*).³ Nonetheless, the organizations that participated in the survey tended to be located in the city of Albuquerque (44%) and most commonly serve Bernalillo County (65%), where roughly one-third of the state’s population lives.⁴

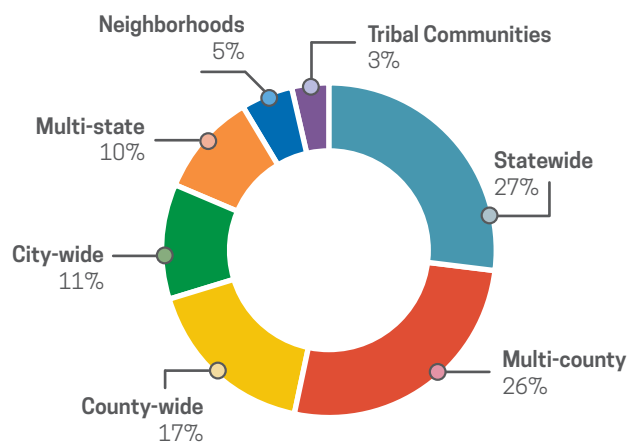


Figure 3. *Geographic Scope of Work*



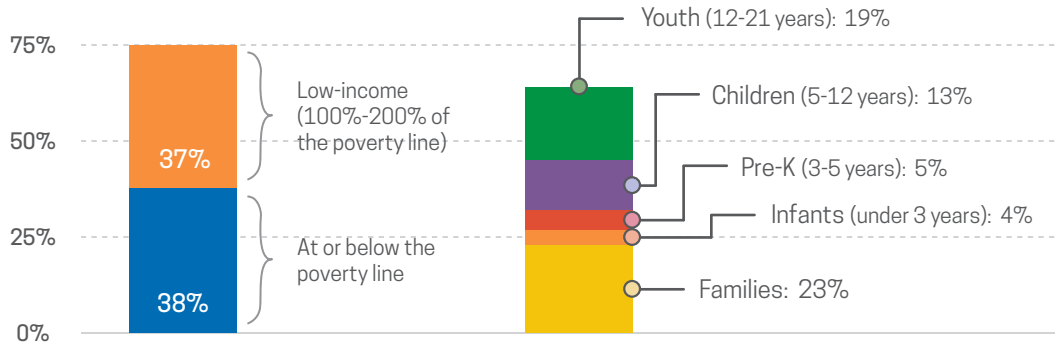


Figure 4. *Nonprofits Work with Vulnerable Populations*

Populations served. *Figure 4* shows that most nonprofits focus on the state's most vulnerable populations, serving individuals with low incomes and/or living below the poverty line (75%) and working with children, youth and/or families (63%). Organizations also tend to support more than one racial group (90%). Consistent with the state's demographic trends, organizations report serving Hispanics/Latinos (84%) and whites (72%).⁵ Half of organizations work with American Indians/Native Americans (50%); and organizations reported serving African Americans and Asian Americans at lower rates (17% and 5%, respectively). Serving diverse populations within racial groups is not uncommon, as American Indian/Native American-serving organizations identify working with 22 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 youth development, from economic security to reproductive health. 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 5* shows the top issue areas across all of the responding nonprofits; with education (30%), youth development (22%), and health (22%) in the top three slots.

This year's survey also asked respondents to select three issues that their organization does not already work on, but that respondents saw as "most related to the problems facing New Mexicans." Essentially, this question asked survey-takers to consider what

issues their organizations were leaving unaddressed (see *Figure 6*). The results of this question generated a different ranking of issues, with behavioral health (28%) and economic security (27%) moving to the top of this list, compared to their position lower on the list of top issues addressed by the current work of organizations.

The comparison between *Figures 5* and *6* reveals that there are many interconnections between the core issues of organizations and the issues nonprofits leaders see as critical to addressing the problems in the state. However, there are some issues that may need additional support. For instance, criminal justice (17%) immigration (11%) and substance abuse / prevention (11%) made the list of related issues although they weren't on the list of the top issues that organizations reported working on currently.

There were also some differences in the top issue priorities between nonprofit types. *Figure 7* represents the issue overlap between organizations that primarily identified as direct service, community organizing and advocacy groups. The issues of education, family (such as child care and parent support), and health were shared by all three of these nonprofit types, but there were eight other issues where only two of these nonprofit types overlapped, and five issues were selected by only one type of organization. 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.



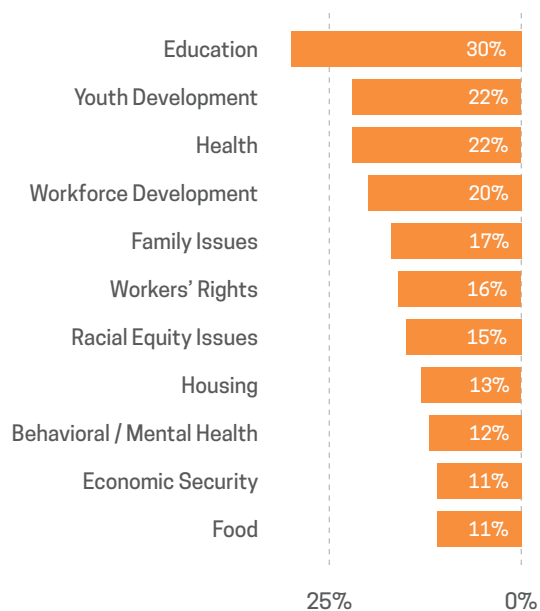


Figure 5. Issues Organizations Currently Work On

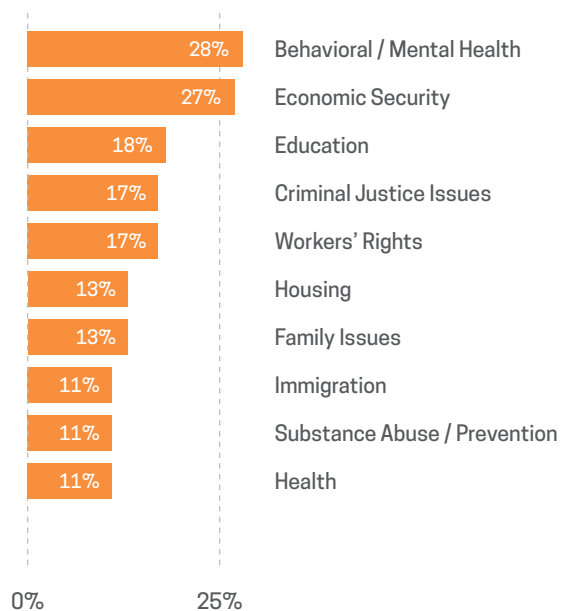


Figure 6. Related Issues Organizations Do NOT Currently Work On

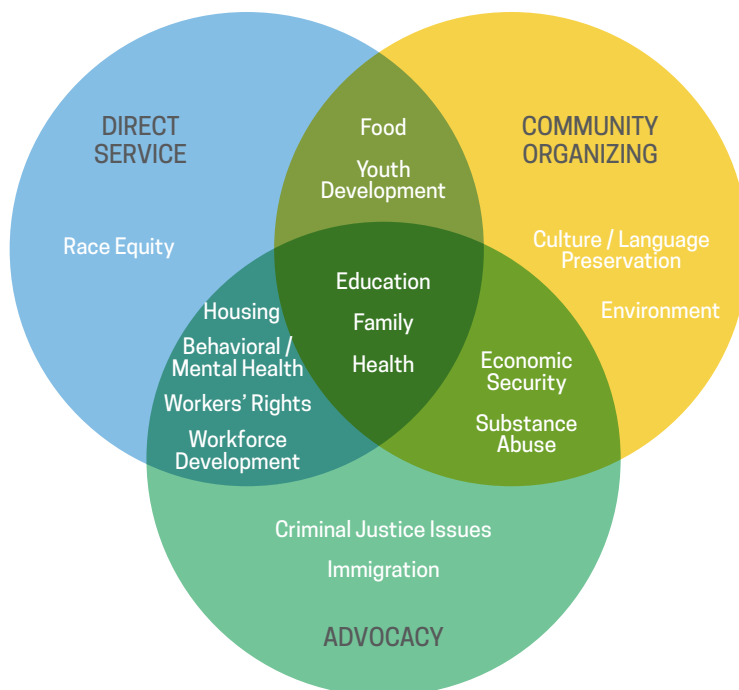


Figure 7. Top Issue Areas by Primary Nonprofit Type



Organizational Needs. As nonprofit organizations work to address the needs of their clients, surrounding communities and the state overall, organizations face some significant internal challenges as well. *Figure 8* shows the struggles identified by survey respondents as being “often” or “always” frustrations for their nonprofits. Roughly two-thirds (68%) of nonprofits reported challenges securing the funding their organizations need, and over half (52%) struggled to meet an increased demand for their services. Organizations also indicated that laws and policies that negatively impact the community (37%) were frequent frustrations.

The following sections of the report will explore the funding dynamics that create such difficulties for organizations, as well as the capacity needed to engage in coalitions, do direct advocacy and partner with other organizations to change the policies and funding decisions that are compounding the problems that New Mexico’s nonprofits work to address.



Figure 8. Challenges “Always” or “Often” Faced by Organizations



WEATHERING THE FINANCIAL STORM

ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SURVEY were distributed across a variety of budget categories. Roughly one in six organizations (17%) report budgets under \$50,000. An additional 22% had budgets between \$50,000 and \$250,000; 31% reported budgets between \$250,001 and \$1 million; and 30% have budgets over \$1 million. As *Figure 9* shows, budgets vary some by nonprofit type, consistent with the survey findings from previous years.

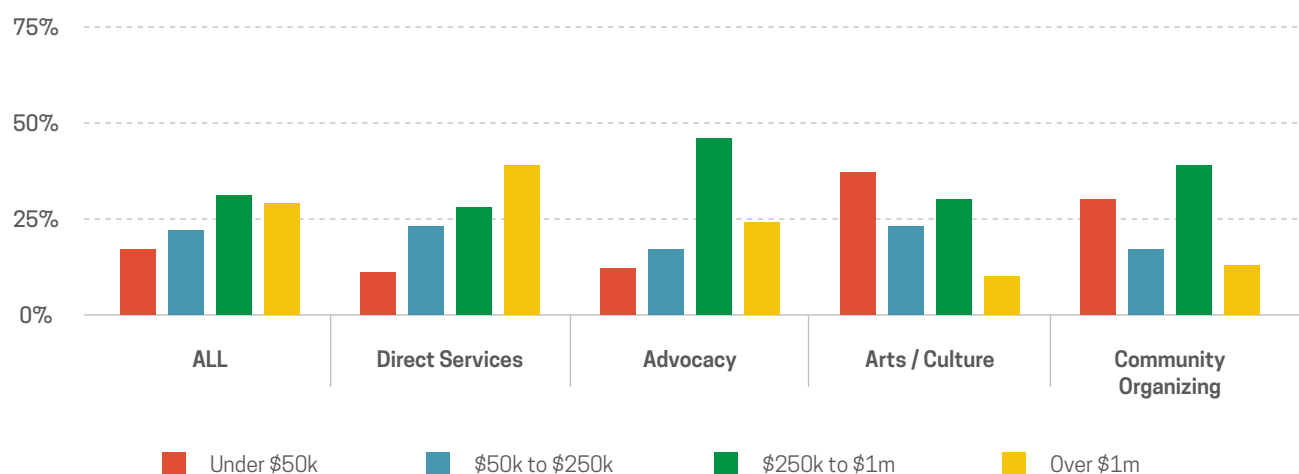


Figure 9. Budget Size by Primary Nonprofit Type

This year's survey asked organizations to identify their three biggest sources of funding. The differences in where organizations get their funding were striking but not unexpected. *Figure 10* (on the following page) shows that organizations that primarily identified as direct service organizations rely on government funding to a greater degree than any of the other funding sources. Arts and culture organizations rely more on individual giving and fees. Although advocacy and organizing groups rely on foundation funding to a similar extent, none of the organizing groups identified "corporate giving" as one of their funding sources.

Roughly half (48%) of respondents reported that their organizations had experienced funding increases in the past year. At the same time, 42% reported that their nonprofits lost funding. Organizations reporting funding increases mostly attributed the new dollars to individual support (28%). By contrast, the biggest share of funding cuts were due to decreases in foundation (17%), individual (18%) and state (18%) dollars. For organizations that reported experiencing both increases and decreases in funding, only a quarter (25%) of them reported that their overall financial situation was better than it was a year ago, nearly half (46%) reported that it was the same and 29% reported that it was worse.



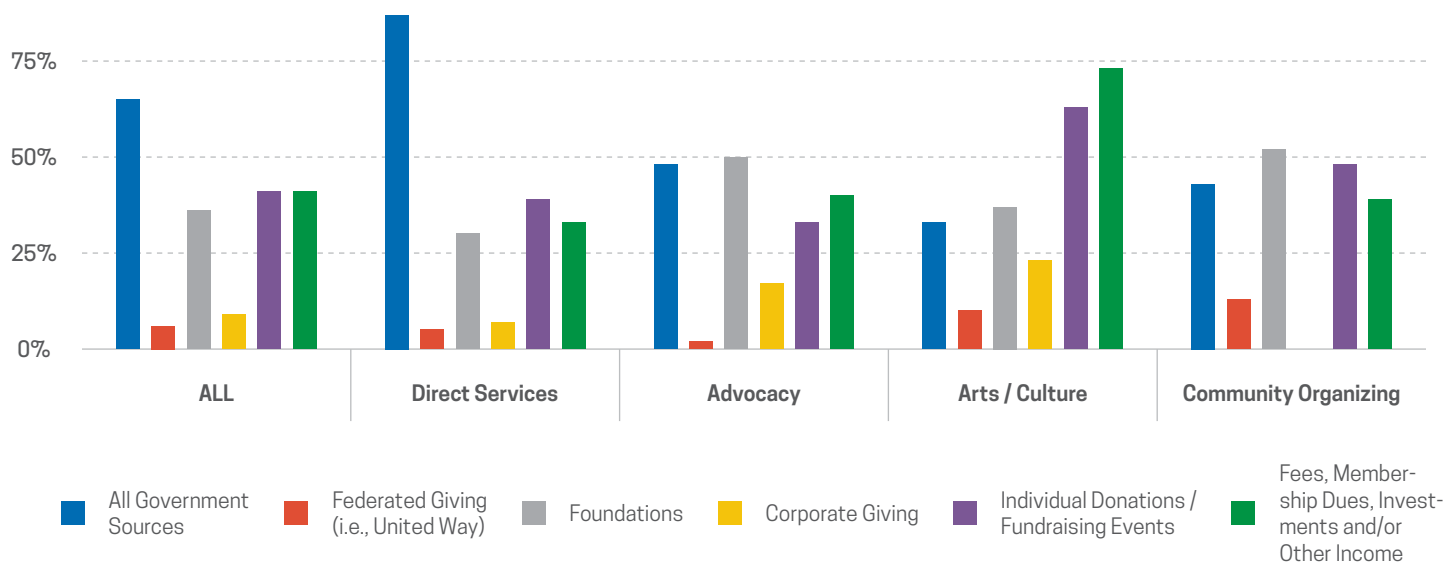


Figure 10. Funding Source by Primary Nonprofit Type

The survey asked respondents to write-in responses about how funding increases or decreases affected their organization's own work. Nearly two fifths of the survey's respondents (39%) shared written reflections on their organizational funding and how it impacts the work that they do. One organizational leader wrote about frequent budgetary struggles: "[The] state agency that disseminates federal funds, decided to spend money differently, reducing our budget by 75% and forcing us to change the services we provide." This was one of several write-in responses about the instability that groups—particularly direct service organizations—face due to their reliance on government funding. Another organization noted that "requirements set forth by state funding and the increase of clients creates difficulties." In fact, the survey found that most direct service organizations reported having to turn people away and that they were seeing increases in their waiting lists (see *Figure 11*). Another respondent quantified the impact of funding cuts on the organization's caseload, writing that "decreases in funding have reduced our staffing by half and cut the number of cases we handle by half."

Some organizations have expressed concern over their budget in the coming years because of the changing political climate. As one organization wrote in a write-in response, "Our funding has been stable however that could change dramatically with the current political shift." Given the growing worries over budget cuts coming from Washington DC, funding concerns and difficulties are likely to intensify.

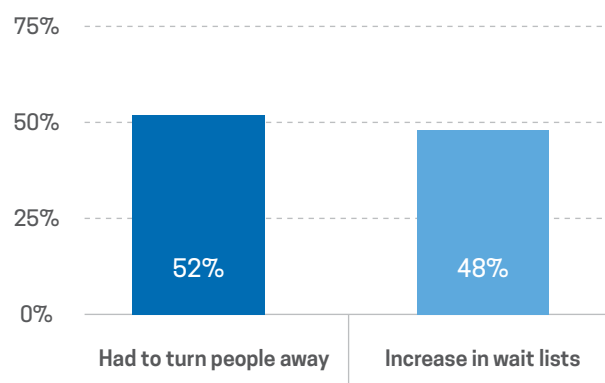


Figure 11. Direct Service Providers Report Turning People Away and Growing Waitlists



WORKING IN COALITIONS

ONE WAY THAT NEW MEXICO NONPROFITS are addressing organizational challenges and issues facing clients and communities is by working in coalitions and alliances. The majority of surveyed organizations (71%) report participating in one or more coalitions in 2016. As in previous years, organizations reported being members of an average of five different coalitions, and some organizations reported participating in 20 or more different coalitions. The majority of organizations (65%) are part of coalitions that work on state-level issues, though many are part of coalitions focused on issues at the county and local levels (38% and 36%, respectively). Organizations rank themselves as active coalition partners: 53% report being “highly” or “very highly” involved in their coalitions and 62% reported being coalition leaders.

Despite the high levels of coalition involvement, some organizations reported strains on their capacity; one respondent wrote that “coalition work is unfunded and therefore difficult to take staff time away to participate at times.” This concern about the impact of coalition involvement on organizational funding and staff time was reiterated by the reasons provided by the 28% of organizations who reported not participating in coalitions (see *Figure 12*). Nonetheless, funding can also be one of the

motivations for coalition involvement. For instance, 21% of organizations indicated that “obtaining new funding” was a main reason they worked in coalitions, and 18% reported working in coalitions to “maintain funding.” Often organizations come together to form coalitions and advocate with legislators to protect the government funding that they rely on.

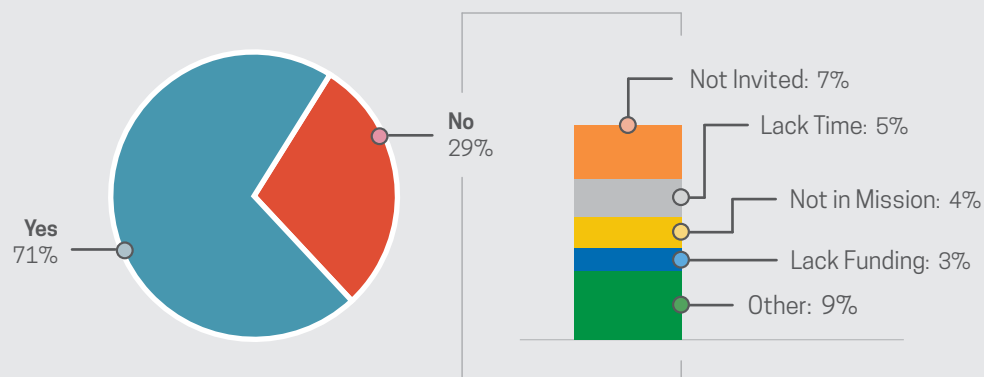


Figure 12. Coalition Participation and the Reasons for NOT Joining Coalitions



Organizations are working in coalitions to address more than 29 different issue areas. *Figure 13* 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 (26%), health (19%), behavioral health and family issues (both at 15%), economic security and housing (both at 12%), and youth development (11%), with 22% writing in some

other issues beyond the 29 provided in the survey. As the figure shows, the issues identified by coalitions clearly relate to the concerns of vulnerable families and individuals in New Mexico. As noted in previous reports, the multiplicity of issues is splitting the pie into very small slivers, which can create competing demands within coalitions and among organizations.

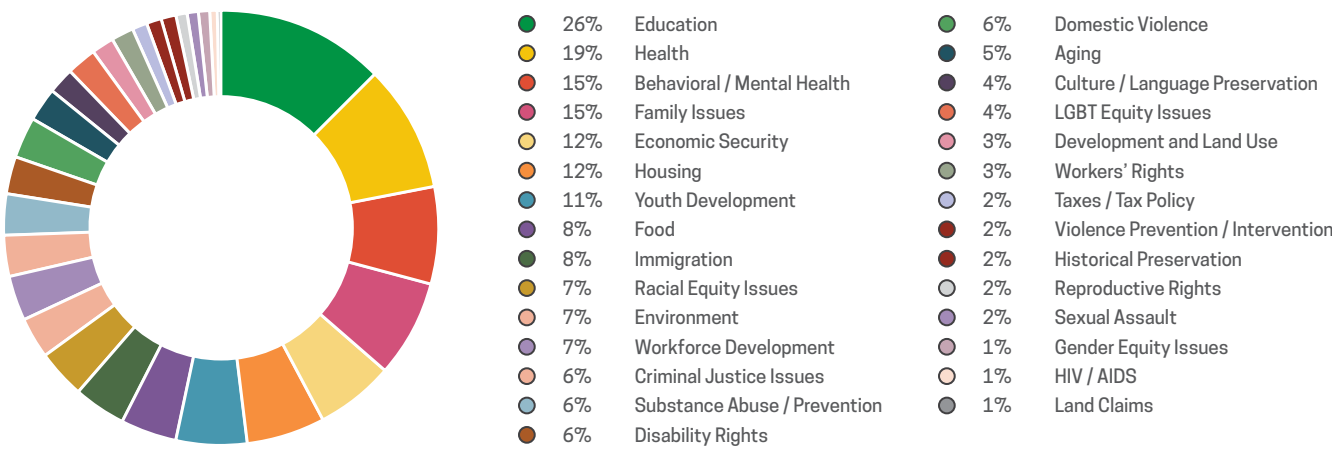


Figure 13. *Issue Areas Addressed in Coalitions*



PUSHING FOR BROADER CHANGE

BEYOND JOINING COALITIONS, organizations also do direct advocacy to advance broader social, policy and structural changes. As with previous years, the survey asked all respondents whether they had engaged in advocacy activities, which were defined broadly to include both direct engagement with policymakers and supporting constituents to have more voice and power over the decisions affecting their lives.

As *Figure 14* shows, over half (58%) of all nonprofits who responded to the survey participated in advocacy activities, but advocacy participation varied across the nonprofit types. It is logical that organizations who primarily identify as advocacy groups would report that they engaged in advocacy the year before (86%); but it is surprising that direct service organizations and community organizing groups had roughly identical rates of advocacy participation (at 59% and 57%, respectively).

Most organizations (65%) who did advocacy focused on “advocating on policies, laws, attitudes and other systemic factors that contribute to the issues or

problems facing clients.” Also, over half (55%) of organizations indicated that they advocated on “issues directly affecting clients” but that were not related to organizational funding, and roughly half (51%) of organizations reported that they engage clients in their advocacy work. The third most frequent reason (37%) for doing advocacy was to protect funding from governmental sources. One organization wrote that although their staff were already being pushed to the limit, the need to maintain funding “triggered a big call- and letter-writing campaign to key legislators.”

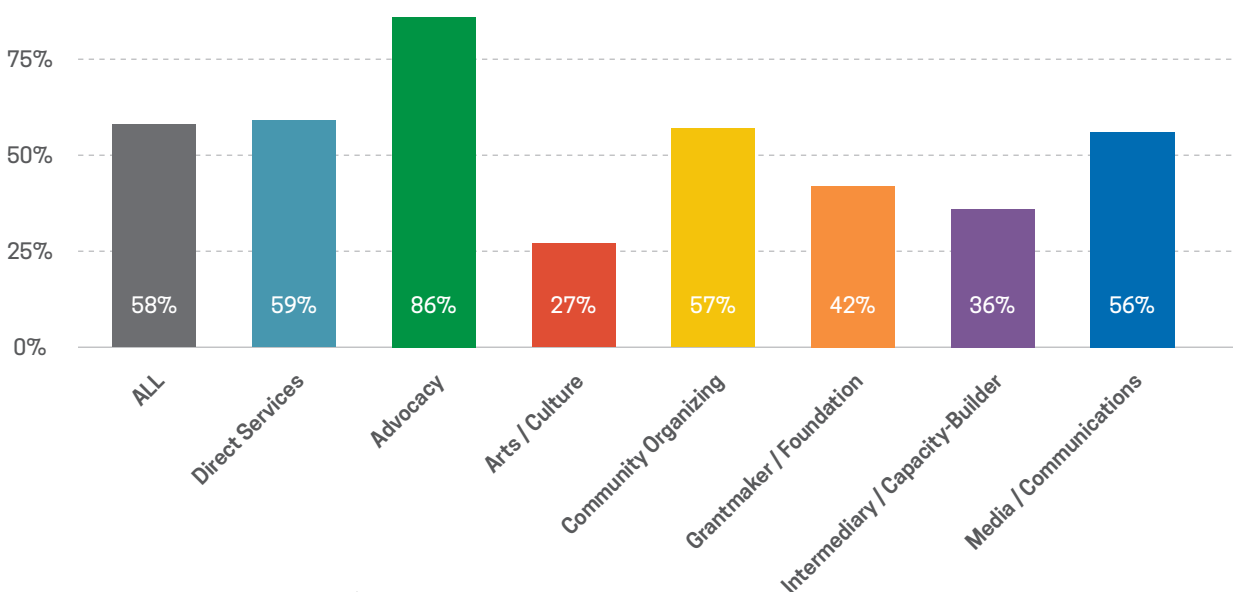


Figure 14. Advocacy Participation by Primary Nonprofit Type



The 2016 survey also included a handful of questions tailored specifically to learning more about the work of organizations who identified as advocacy and/or organizing groups. The survey asked these groups to select up to three items from menus of a dozen “community outreach” activities and “public action tactics.” *Figure 15* shows that responding organizations were much less likely to report traditional

grassroots organizing activities or confrontational tactics. Half (50%) of community organizing and advocacy groups identified “coordination with local schools” as one of their top three outreach activities; but less than 10% of organizations reported doing popular education, canvassing, voter registration or phone-banking as one of their top three outreach activities. Similarly, more than half (56%) of these

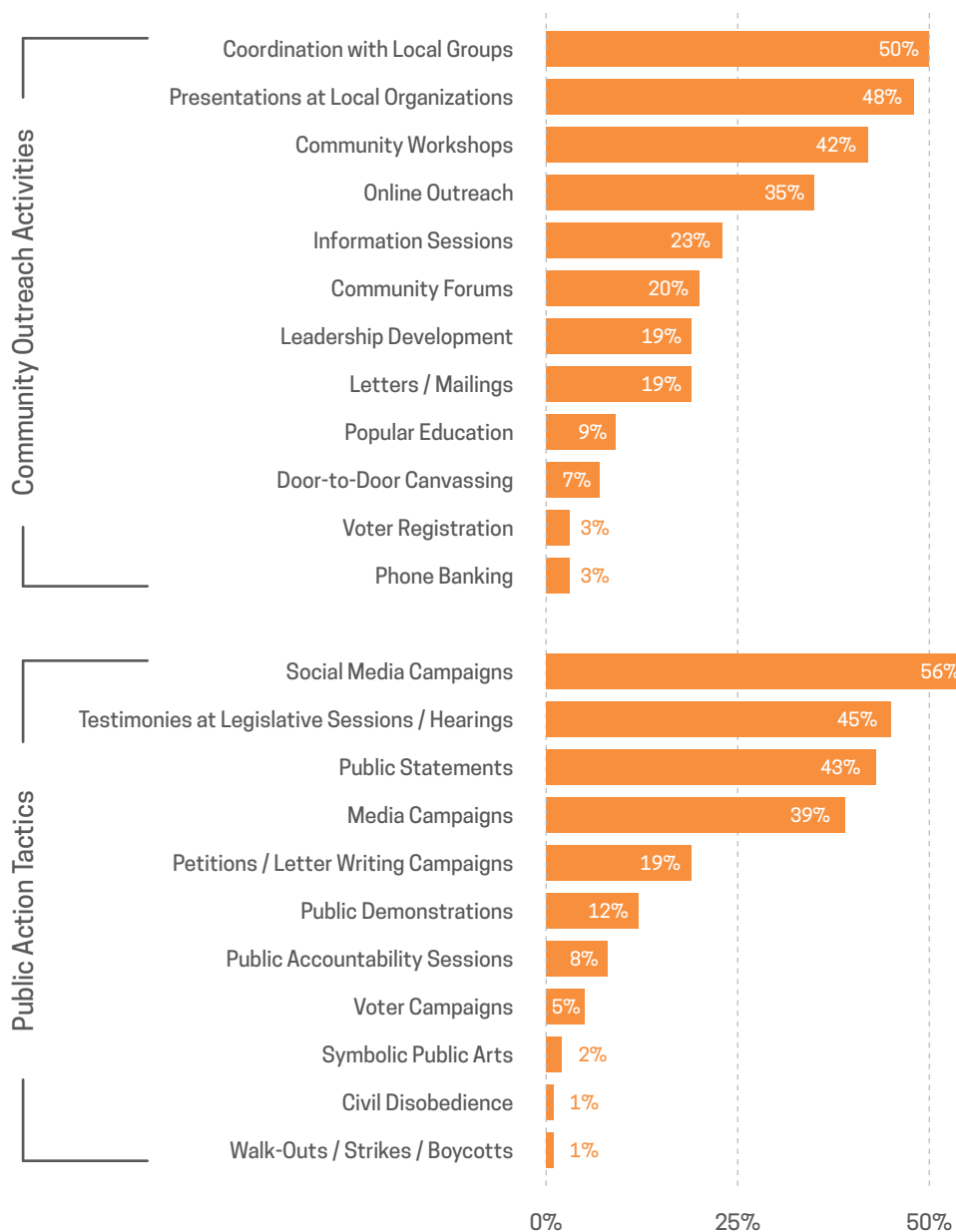


Figure 15. Community Outreach Activities and Public Action Tactics



organizations reported using social media as a key tactic for taking action, but only 12% selected public demonstrations like rallies, marches and protests, while traditional activist tactics like strikes and civil disobedience barely even registered. In response to the renewed spirit of activism and resistance to regressive policy change at the federal level, more organizations who do some advocacy and organizing may choose to explore tactics that appear to not be utilized much currently.

Overall, 38% of responding organizations indicated that they did not do any advocacy. These groups then responded to a follow-up question about their reasons for not participating in advocacy efforts (see *Figure 16*). Nearly one-quarter (23%) of organizations not engaging in advocacy indicated that

advocacy was not a permissible activity, reflecting a common misinterpretation of tax law. In addition, 45% of organizations did not consider advocacy to be within their mission. Nonetheless, the other reasons that organizations selected for not doing advocacy point to possible opportunities to support more nonprofits to build their advocacy capacity. Increased training and resources for nonprofits could address some of the concerns about time (30%), funding (25%) and skill level (17%) that prevent many organizations from doing advocacy.

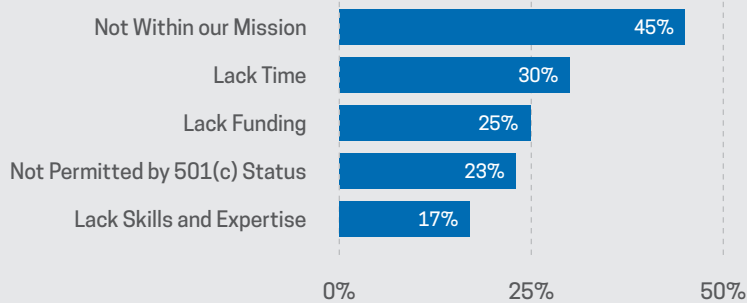


Figure 16. Reasons for NOT Doing Advocacy



SUPPORTING THE VOICE AND POWER OF CONSTITUENTS

ONE IMPORTANT ROLE for organizations working with vulnerable communities is to help people rediscover their own voice and power. To explore how organizations support their community members in advocating for themselves and their communities, the survey included three new questions; one focused on how groups gather feedback, another was based on the International Association for Public Participation's spectrum of community engagement, and the survey's final question asked about the "underlying causes" of the problems impacting New Mexico's people and communities.

Recently, nonprofits have been embracing feedback loops and other methods for getting feedback from their clients.⁶ Figure 17 shows how various methods of feedback have been embraced across the range of nonprofit types. Nearly two-thirds of organizations (64%) survey constituents to get feedback on services. The data also shows that nearly half (46%)

of organizations have constituents serving on their Board of Directors. While there were some differences that emerged when comparing nonprofit types, the general openness to feedback, and particularly the involvement of constituents in organizational governance, was very positive.

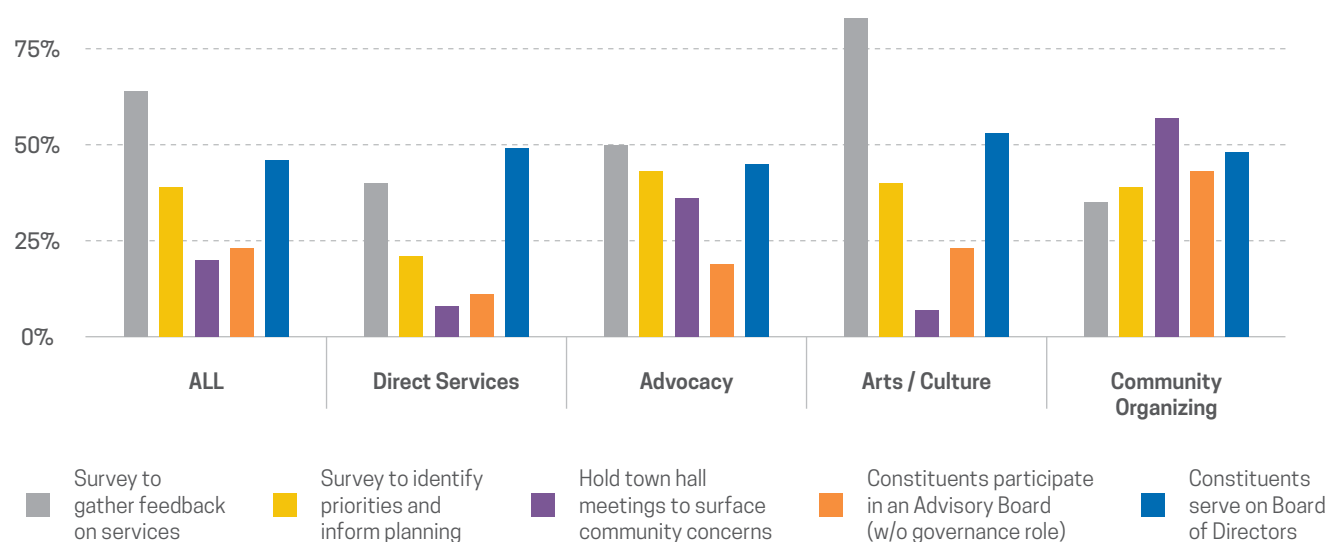


Figure 17. Feedback Loops by Primary Nonprofit Type



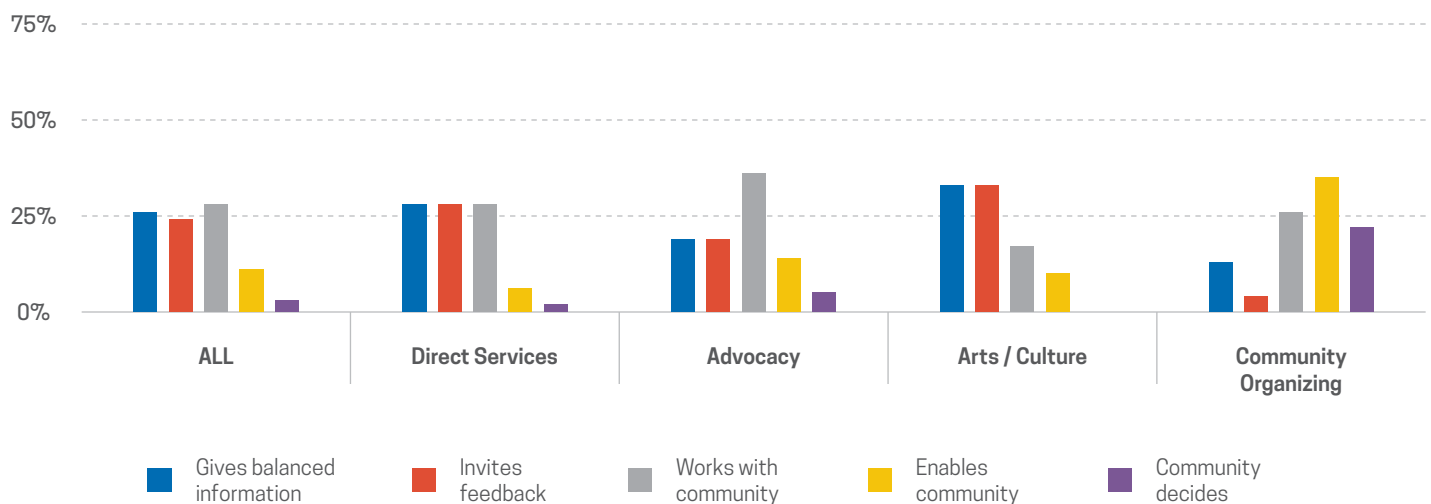


Figure 18. Community Engagement by Primary Nonprofit Type

Collecting feedback can create opportunities for nonprofit leaders to improve their impact, but deeper forms of community engagement are also critical to efforts to create social change.⁷ Therefore, the survey asked respondents to select one point on a scale of community engagement that best represented how their nonprofit engaged with their community. The scale went from providing “balanced and objective information” on one end, to working “with community members to ensure that their aspirations and concerns are considered” in the middle, to giving “community members sole-decision-making authority” at the other end. As shown in *Figure 18*, direct service and arts / culture groups were concentrated at the “give balanced info” end of the scale, whereas community organizing groups were concentrated at the “community decides” end. It is interesting to note that while inviting feedback was among the most frequent ways to engage with the community for direct services and advocacy groups (28% and 19%), inviting

feedback was the least frequent mode for community organizing groups (4%). These differences are not surprising, given the differing orientations of nonprofit types, and the day-to-day work that each type of organization must do. However, some direct service groups are exploring possibilities for having people directly impacted by their programs be more involved in organizational decision-making,⁸ and might seek out partners who do community organizing to share insights about how to move along the spectrum towards deeper engagement with the community.

More and more nonprofits, foundations, and capacity builders are seeking to examine how issues interact with root causes, in order to incorporate a more systemic understanding of equity for their work.⁹ Therefore, the survey’s final open-ended question asked about “underlying causes.” Roughly two-thirds of respondents (68%) wrote something in response to the final question; sometimes the responses were



one-word answers like “poverty,” whereas other respondents wrote upwards of 100 words. One out of three (36%) responses mentioned poverty, and another 12% included terms like racism, inequality or discrimination. However, there were also a handful of responses that seemed to focus on individuals themselves as the root causes of problems. For instance, one of the respondents whose organization worked on criminal justice issues described the underlying causes of the problems facing their clients as “unhealthy families which lead to little or no parenting, then involvement with alcohol, drugs and gangs, and ultimately incarceration.”

In contrast to the responses that focused on the failings of the individuals seeking support from nonprofit organizations, there were a number of responses that focused on historical and structural factors as the underlying causes of issues in the state. For instance, one respondent from an advocacy organization wrote that “lack of funding for critical government services, due in large part to unfair and regressive tax policies” was at the root of problems facing many New Mexicans. Another service provider that develops and manages affordable supportive housing wrote about policies and “institutional structures that require individuals to end up in a worst case scenario before being eligible for help” as the underlying causes of homelessness. The wide range of analyses of the root causes of the problems that create the need for nonprofit organizations, their services and their advocacy for social change point to the continued value of developing a shared narrative and understanding of the “common good,” in order to galvanize nonprofits to work together for positive change for all New Mexicans and their families.

Underlying Causes:

“

“A legacy of colonization, inter-generational trauma, and disenfranchisement has made our people vulnerable to loss of land, water rights, and cultural knowledge and practices and has further perpetuated the cycle of poverty.”

*~ Direct Service organization
working on sustainable agriculture*

“Our organizations do not take seriously the work needed on racial equity at interpersonal or structural levels. Our opposition is clear that they use race/ethnicity to further divide our communities so the status quo/dominant society will continue to decide who has value and how resources get distributed. We need to be just as clear when we discuss race.”

*~ Community Organizing group
working on economic security,
immigration, and racial equity issues*

”



NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS BUILD PARTNERSHIPS with other organizations for a wide variety of reasons.¹⁰ Some collaborations involve frequent interaction and high levels of trust and attachment; while other collaborations may only require occasional information sharing and generate weaker ties between organizations.¹¹ From a sector-wide perspective, it is healthy—and, in fact, important—for nonprofit networks to have a mix of strong and weak ties. In addition to partnering with other nonprofits, many organizations develop partnerships across sectors. These cross-sector partnerships—particularly with government and businesses—can enable nonprofit organizations to access different pools of resources and knowledge.

To explore various themes related to organizational partnerships, the 2016 survey assessed networking among nonprofit organizations, as well as cross-sector partnerships by asking survey respondents to identify three organizational partners.¹² Survey respondents provided the following pieces of information on each of the three partners they identified:

- **Sector:** Respondents chose from a list of sectors that included nonprofit, government, business, hospitals, and universities.
- **Nonprofit Type (if applicable):** For partnerships with other nonprofits, respondents identified the organizational type (using the same seven categories described at the beginning of this report).
- **Level of Trust:** Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of trust in their partner, whether low, medium, or high.
- **Frequency of Communication:** The survey provided a five-point scale ranging from “once or twice a year” to “more than once a month.”

- **How They Collaborate:** Survey respondents indicated how they tend to work with the partner they nominated; choosing from a list of seven collaboration types that included “advocate for policy change together,” “do community outreach together,” and “strategize / plan / set goals together.”

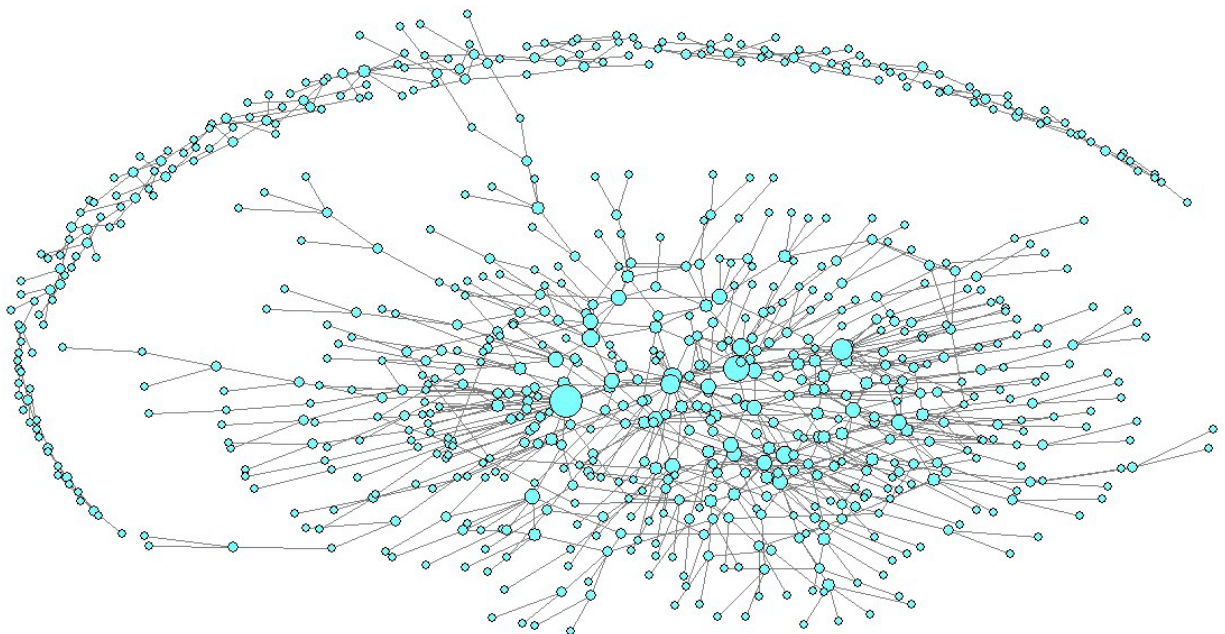


Photo Credit: James Lee (flickr/jronaldee/5380860604)



Using social network analysis software (UCINET) we visualized the network of organizations that responded to the 2016 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey. *Figure 19* presents the “map” of this network. There is a discernable core cluster of highly connected organizations, as indicated by the clusters of large circles (on the right side). In fact, the network analysis software revealed that 546 out of the total 745 organizations (74%) were connected to each other in the core cluster. Given the size of New Mexico, this high level of connectivity between organizations is impressive and indicates the robust relationships between nonprofits.

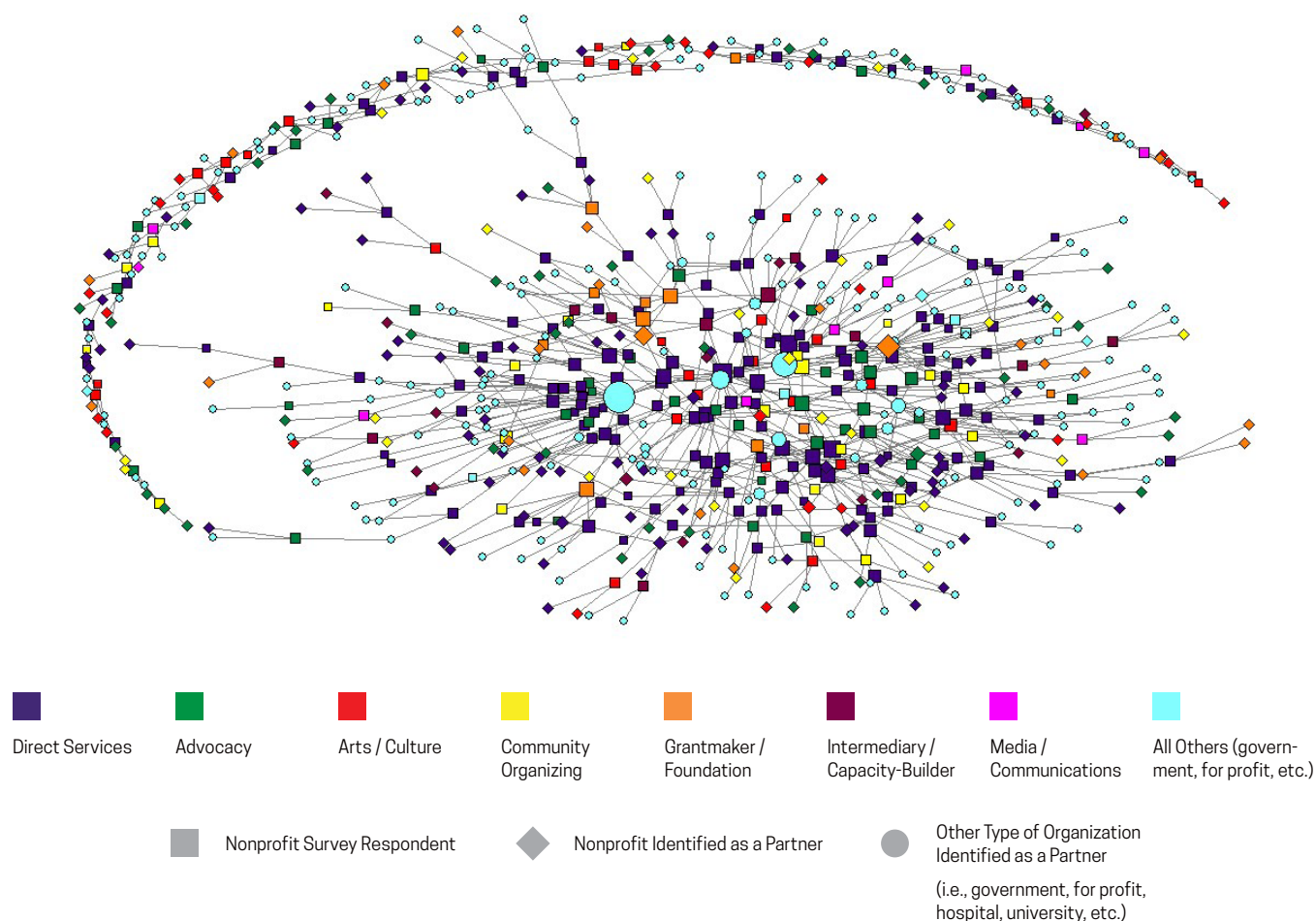
The vast majority of organizations rated their relationships with their partners as strong—both indicated by frequent communication and high levels of trust—which is a testament to the connectivity between organizations in the nonprofit sector in New Mexico. In fact, roughly 80% of respondents rated their level of trust in their partners as “high,” rather than “medium” or “low.” A similar share of respondents indicated that they communicated frequently with their partners; roughly 40% reported that they communicated “more than once a month” with the partner, and another two-fifths (39%) reported that they communicated at least every



Size of node is proportional to the number of nominations received.

Figure 19. *A Network of Partnerships*





Size of node is proportional to the number of nominations received.

Figure 20. A Network of Partnerships with Organizational Detail

other month with their partners. This data provides a helpful reminder to nonprofit leaders working to strengthen their relationships with partner organizations: higher communication frequency is related to greater levels of trust.¹³

This year's survey gathered additional data that allowed for analysis of respondents' partnerships both within the nonprofit sector and across sectors. Overall, more than two-thirds (69%) of the partner organizations identified through the survey were nonprofits. Among the remaining organizations, 16% were government agencies, and 15% were institutions in other sectors such as businesses, hospitals and

universities. *Figure 20* presents the network graph of partnerships, similar to *Figure 19* but with the added detail of the different sectors and nonprofit types. Looking at the map, there are several larger light blue circles representing institutions in other sectors that were identified as partners by many survey respondents. For instance, 24 nonprofits who completed the survey identified New Mexico's Children Youth and Families Department as a partner. Furthermore, a dozen identified the University of New Mexico (UNM) as a partner, while an additional 16 organizations identified specific offices or initiatives at UNM.



To provide a better understanding of the connections across sectors and nonprofit types, the table below shows the percentage of connections within the same nonprofit type, with a different nonprofit type, with a government agency, and with other sectors.¹⁴ Overall, the whole network had a higher number of external ties than internal ties, meaning responding organizations were generally oriented to build partnerships across nonprofit-type and

sectors. It is interesting to note that among direct service organizations, the largest share of the partnerships they reported on as partners were with other direct service organizations (42%). However, direct service groups also had a larger percentage of cross-sector ties (20% with government and 11% with other sectors), compared to advocacy, organizing, grantmaking, arts/culture and capacity-building nonprofits.

	Within Nonprofit Type	Across Nonprofit Type	Ties with Government	Ties with Other Sectors
Direct Services	42%	28%	20%	11%
Advocacy	29%	46%	12%	13%
Arts / Culture	49%	25%	18%	8%
Community Organizing	11%	72%	10%	7%
Grantmaker / Foundation	16%	74%	4%	7%
Intermediary / Capacity-Builder	17%	63%	5%	15%
Media / Communication	7%	36%	39%	18%

Table 1. Internal versus External Ties



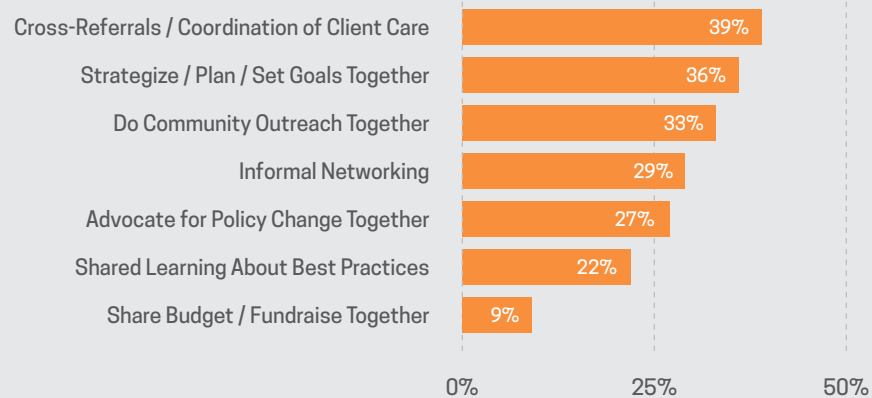
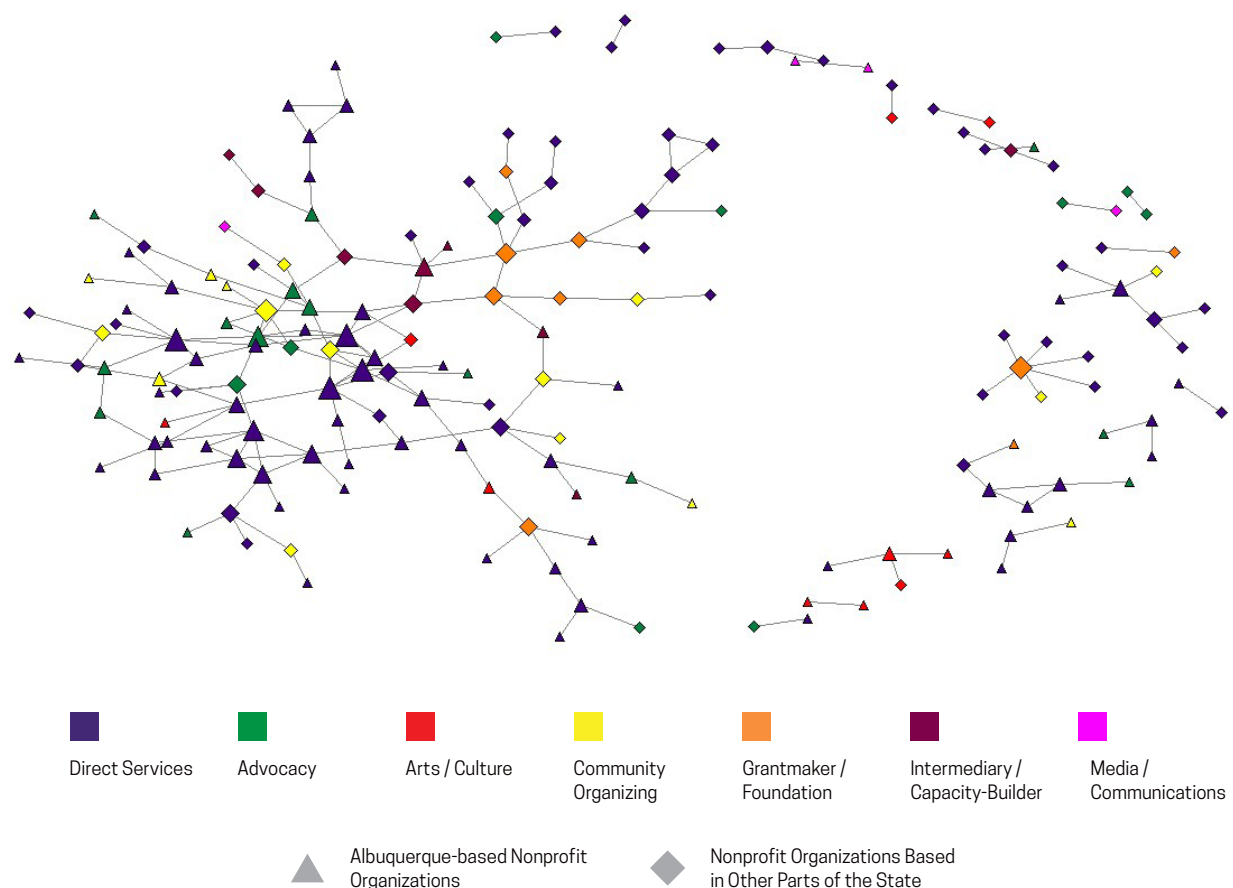


Figure 21. *Types of Partnerships*

Another change made for 2016 to this section of the survey was that respondents were asked to identify how they partner with each of the three organizations they nominated. *Figure 21* shows that nearly two-fifths (39%) of the partnerships that respondents reported on involved cross-referrals and coordination of client care. Towards the middle of the list, just over one-quarter (27%) of the organizational partnerships involved advocacy for policy change. We examined the partnerships that involved joint advocacy to better understand how organizations connected across nonprofit type and sector when working together to change public policy. Direct

service organizations tended to partner on advocacy with organizations who do not do service delivery (45%), which is nearly the reverse of the overall findings about direct service group's ties within their nonprofit type (as previously shown in the table). It is also notable that roughly one-sixth (16%) of the joint advocacy partnerships of direct service groups included government agencies, which may point to some opportunity for service providers to leverage their relationships with government agencies for policy change.





Size of node is proportional to the number of nominations received.

Figure 22. *Partnerships between Nonprofit Respondents*

We also generated a network graph showing the interconnections among the 295 organizations that participated in the survey, to gain more insights about how the nonprofits who completed the survey relate to each other (see *Figure 22*). It is impressive to note that 61% of the 295 responding organizations identified another responding organization as a partner, with several mutual and overlapping connections within this “closed network.” The network graph shows a distinct cluster (on the left corner) of highly-connected organizations, which are mostly based in Albuquerque. It is not surprising in a state with long distances between population

centers that there would be a tendency toward local collaboration. In fact, fewer than one-third (29%) of the organizations based in Albuquerque identified partners who were outside of Bernalillo County. Thus, efforts to strengthen connections between organizations across New Mexico—whether through statewide convenings, travel stipends to enable organizations to travel to the Roundhouse to advocate together, or other strategies—could yield real benefits in building the power of the nonprofit sector statewide.



BUILDING NONPROFIT POWER TO MAKE CHANGE

THE NONPROFITS WHO COMPLETED the 2016 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey tackle complicated issues, help children and families struggling to overcome poverty, and work to fix the many policies, systems and structures that undermine the well-being of New Mexicans. These organizations deal with some internal capacity challenges, but as a sector, nonprofits have many assets.

New Mexico's nonprofits have been making ends meet with limited and uncertain funding for years, and are flexible in adapting to the ups and downs of funding cycles. That skill will likely become even more important in the coming years. Nonprofits advocate on systemic issues impacting their clients, not only to protect or increase funding from governmental sources. Responding organizations also tend to be highly networked and very involved in coalitions.

Despite the many strengths and assets of nonprofit organizations, the indicators—particularly for child well-being—in New Mexico remain dire. For instance, the KIDS COUNT program ranks all 50 states in terms of child well-being, measuring states on 16 indicators organized into four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. In 1995, New Mexico was ranked 40th among the states for child well-being but the state's ranking has fallen over the past two decades. New Mexico has ranked 49th among the states for the past three years.¹⁵

Turning those trends around, particularly when the budget situation is not likely to improve under the current political realities, will require that nonprofit organizations build on—and maintain—their strengths, while also taking action together in new and different ways.

To support nonprofits to work collectively for lasting change, we offer the following recommendations:

- 1. Set Ambitious and Aligned Goals.** For the third year, this survey's social network analysis and maps demonstrated that there is a robust network of relationships between organizations in the state. But the other data showing some limited participation in coalitions and lack of involvement in advocacy efforts reveal that nonprofits are not fully leveraging the connectivity between organizations to make lasting change for New Mexico's vulnerable populations. For New Mexico's nonprofit sector to take full advantage of these organic networks, organizations should lean into partnerships and coalitions that involve joint advocacy around a vision for big change in the state. This is not to minimize collaborations focused on achieving greater efficiencies in cross-referrals and coordination of care. But it is more important now than ever that nonprofit organizations partner and collaborate to mount an effective and powerful resistance in the face of budgetary cuts and political retrenchment.
- 2. Advocate With and For Those with the Most at Stake.** A key finding from the survey was that 46% of respondents reported that their organization had constituents serving on the Board of Directors. In addition, half (51%) of organizations who engaged in advocacy reported that they involve their clients in advocacy activities. These efforts to build the leadership of constituents are



key to ensuring that change comes from the bottom-up. Unfortunately, this year's survey again showed that roughly two-fifths of responding organizations (38%) did not engage in any advocacy activities. Limited funding remains a barrier to getting more nonprofits to take on more advocacy as a core part of their work. As nonprofits face impending budget cuts from governmental sources, private and community foundations will be called upon to fill those gaps in operating expenses; but should also embrace and fund advocacy and grassroots organizing efforts that create meaningful roles for community members to take action to improve the policies impacting their lives.

3. Risk Shifting the Paradigm. This year's survey explored how respondents thought about the "underlying causes" of the problems that make their organizations necessary. While some organizations embrace a systems analysis that highlights the connections between poverty,

racial discrimination and economic inequality, other organizations seemed to embrace a paradigm that largely blamed clients and communities for the problems they face. Although a majority of organizations already advocate for vulnerable communities, the leading reason that organizations gave for not doing advocacy was that it was not part of their mission. Some of these organizations might shift their perspective about the value of advocacy if engaged in deeper conversations with other nonprofits about the underlying causes of the problems their organizations address. While widespread agreement on the causes of social problems may not be possible in the near term, surfacing shared viewpoints about the impacts of systems, structures and policies can help nonprofit leaders better understand what issues organizations can unite around to reverse the trends that have kept New Mexico at the bottom of many measures of health and well-being.



Photo Credit: Anthony H. (flickr/cakvalasc)



Endnotes

- 1 See the previous reports: “*Working Towards the Common Good: Findings from the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey*,” available at: http://buildingmovement.org/reports/entry/working_towards_the_common_good_2015; “*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/2016_NM_Nonprofit_Survey_Instrument.pdf
- 3 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%.
- 4 The U.S. Census Bureau’s “Quick Facts” provides population estimates for Bernalillo County (676,953) and New Mexico overall (2,081,015) for the year 2016.
- 5 According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial composition of New Mexico in 2015 consisted of: Hispanics/Latinos (48.0%), Whites (38.4%); American Indians/Native Americans (10.5%); African Americans (2.6%); and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (1.7%).
- 6 Debra E. Blum. “Feedback Movement Blossoms,” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, February 8, 2015. <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Feedback-Movement-Blossoms/151751>
- 7 Melody Barnes and Paul Schmitz. (2016). Community engagement matters (now more than ever). *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 14(2): 32-39. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/community_engagement_matters_now_more_than_ever
- 8 Alicia Lueras Maldonado and Leah Steimel. “The ‘Common Good’ in Action,” Building Movement Project blog, March 2017. http://www.buildingmovement.org/blog/entry/the_common_good_in_action
- 9 Sheryl Petty and Amy B. Dean. “Five Elements of a Thriving Justice Ecosystem: Pursuing Deep Equity.” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, April 13, 2017. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/04/13/five-elements-of-a-thriving-justice-ecosystem-pursuing-deep-equity/>
- 10 Jessica E. Sowa. (2009). “The Collaboration Decision in Nonprofit Organizations: Views from the Front Line.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(6): 1003-1025.
- 11 Learn more at: Keith G. Provan and Juliann G. Sebastian. (1998). “Networks within networks: Service Link Overlap, Organizational Cliques, and Network Effectiveness.” *The Academy of Management Journal*, 41(4): 453-463.

Peter Reuell. “Where cooperation thrives.” *Harvard Gazette*, March 29, 2017. <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/03/harvard-scientists-help-develop-algorithm-that-predicts-social-cooperation/>



- 12 Although the surveys in the previous two years asked participants to identify five partners, the information gathered on the smaller number of partners and partnerships was more detailed than in prior years, allowing for more in-depth analysis of the connections between organizations than had been possible before.
- 13 We ran a QAP Correlation between the measures of “trust” and “frequency of communication” and found that both were highly correlated, and statistically significant (QAP correlation coefficient = 0.93 and 0.70, respectively, both were significant at 0.01). In other words, trust and communication frequency have a significantly positive relationship, where higher communication frequency co-occurs with higher level of trust, lower communication frequency co-occurs with lower level of trust.
- 14 Learn more at: David Krackhardt and Robert N. Stern. (1988). “Informal Networks and Organizational Crises: An Experimental Simulation.” *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 51: 123–140.

Bin Chen and James Krauskopf. (2013). “Integrated or disconnected? Examining Formal and Informal Networks in a Merged Nonprofit Organization.” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 23(3): 325–345.
- 15 New Mexico Voices for Children. KIDS COUNT in New Mexico: 2016 Data Book. <http://www.nmvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NMVC-DataBook2016-Web.pdf>



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