



WHISTLE STOP OVERVIEW SUMMARY

Nonprofit Missouri conducted six "whistle stop listening sessions" throughout Missouri in St. Charles County, Springfield, Kansas City, Columbia and two in St. Louis City from February 10 through March 31, 2017. A total of 196 participants representing 172 different agencies attended and over 285 people registered for the sessions.

STATED SESSION OUTCOMES:

Participants were to leave the session with:

- · Definition of potential collective action steps;
- · Recognition of issues at the forefront of agency's agendas;
- · A series of inclusive key advocacy messages; and
- Clarity on how NPMO can support their organization's advocacy efforts.

FOUR OUESTIONS WERE REPEATED AT EACH SESSION:

- 1. What are you hearing from staff, board, clients and stakeholders?
- 2. What strategies are you employing to address what you are hearing?
- 3. What resources do you need to implement these strategies?
- 4. How can NPMO assist you?

The sessions were facilitated in small and larger groups; notes were collected and evaluations circulated. Surveys, which included the four questions, were sent to all who registered and to those who did not attend. It should be noted that the sessions were held in the first half of Missouri's legislative session prior to the passing of the state or federal budget.

COMMON THEMES

From all six sessions, common themes emerged, a frame of external and internal organizational contexts were highlighted, and several recommendations were offered to Nonprofit Missouri for future action.



Nonprofit Missouri (NPMO) is the collective voice to unite, strengthen and advance the nonprofit sector in Missouri. Our priorities are advocacy and knowledge building. NPMO was formed in 2010 as the result of 3 years of input from over 400 nonprofits. This alliance of Missouri's nonprofit organizations – created by and for nonprofits - links local organizations to a statewide audience to: speak with a unified voice on critical policy issues affecting the sector; manage and lead more effectively; collaborate and exchange solutions; and achieve greater impact in our communities.

COMMENTS

- "Do not fear the change; you must change to grow"
- "Collaboration fatigue"
- "Increased cost of doing business while decreasing operations support"
- "Perfect storm of generational transition board, staff, donors"
- "Organizations need to **critically ask** what did we learn, then act"
- "Support moving from cooperation to collaboration/integration"
- "Focusing on programs is a **Band-Aid** and will not change the system"
- "Too often hear that we are the only ones doing that; awareness of the market is important"
- "Figuring out how to adjust and survive"

WHAT PEOPLE ARE "HEARING?"

The most repeated concepts and phrases were **uncertainty**, **sustainability**, **duplication**, **collaboration**, and **leadership**.

Participants identified the sense of **uncertainty** around funding opportunities, programmatic costs, and the legislative environment. External factors affecting staff and clients contributed to the feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and stress. These factors included the new and current national and state political environment, real or potential rise in poverty rates (even as employment rises), rise in need for services, increase demand for shelters for immigrants, domestic violence, human trafficking, and increase in mental health needs.

Sustainability aligned with the element of uncertainty in that organizations need to sustain current levels of funding, programs, clients, and infrastructure (for example with their buildings). Concern for sustainability was seen in the context of increased competition.

Duplication was mentioned as something that is often heard, perceived to be real, or an area of question. Participants understood the prevalence of duplication of services, ideas, and missions and expressed that the sector lacks a system for easily identifying where duplication is occurring. In general, consensus suggests that having information about other nonprofits could help to inform and to diminish duplication.

This leads to the next major issue of **collaboration** which had both positive and negative elements. While participants agreed there is a pressure to collaborate, there was recognition that there is a lack of coordinated data, lack of strategic communications within and between organizations, and lack of support to effectively collaborate. On the positive side, there are opportunities for new partnerships, including more public/private/nonprofit partnership configurations.

Leadership issues included those involving staff, board, and policy makers. The workforce issues included staff development, recruitment, retention, and lack of access to opportunities for training. Participants indicated a need to help leadership navigate partnerships and navigate in the collaboration arena. Participants understood the increased need to demonstrate impact with "smart" outcomes. There was an acknowledgement of leadership transitions for professional staff and boards with boomers retiring, middle managers remaining untapped and untrained to assume new roles and the influx of millennials into the workforce.

The nonprofit sector needs to confront and deal with privilege and equity within our sector, our organizations, between us and in a broad sense, the impact in, and on, our communities and the people on whose behalf we serve.

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES?

The strategies identified were those currently employed by participants and those that were needed to address concerns. A summary of strategies include **collaboration** and **partnerships**, **relationship building**, **communication**, **board development**, **funding**, and **advocacy** as well as **specific issues for funders**. It is worth noting that participants in Columbia and St. Charles stated a very distinct sense of connection as a sector. In Columbia, the group attributed this to their United Way professionals, the positive impact of COMO Gives (a focused month of giving in December), and a general sense that this is how nonprofits do business in Boone County. In St. Charles, there was a recognition of the leadership shown by the Community Council of St. Charles County and the presence of the Nonprofit Center at the Spencer Road Branch of the St. Charles City-County Library District.

The issue most often mentioned was the importance of **collaboration** and **partnerships**, including building, implementing, and maintaining collaborations among agencies, with public and private partners including universities, high schools, researchers, and "out-of-the-box" partners like unions and chambers. Participants share a need to reach across silos and sectors, increase the diversity of partners and partnerships, and internally reduce silos. Collaborations and partnerships can support the sharing of back office and other shared cost saving measures. There was a reminder to make better use of intermediaries to represent collective concerns and goals as well as the need to start with shared goals and to use evaluative thinking to reach an understanding of the nature of the collaboration or partnership.

Relationship building closely tied with and to collaboration, emphasizing the need for personal interactions. This is the time to re-establish relationships with the community and to be involved with authentic engagement with constituents.

COMMENTS

"Nonprofits are a huge presence in the economy – let's own it"

"Intentional collaboration"

"We are actively listening to our constituents"

"Know when you are **grant ready** and seek only the funding you need and are ready to manage"

Another core strategy identified was **communication** – telling your story – to constituents, your current and potential funders, and the public about what you do and the impact you are having.

Strategies with the **board** included educating and engaging the board through training and clarifying roles and responsibilities. There was a recognition that the board provides external support and that board diversification has led to diverse funding.

Specific funding strategies that were shared included diversifying sources, replacing government with increased private funding sources, implementing planned giving and monthly giving strategies, balancing data and storytelling, and promoting entrepreneurship in the workplace. There were a few references to reviewing and understanding different corporate structures, including hybrid structures which might relieve the current dependency on philanthropic resources.

Participants identified **advocacy** in a broad context of education and communication as well as legislative efforts to support many of the key strategies. This includes creating relationships with policy makers before needing to ask for a favor, coordinating advocacy efforts, and educating policy makers.

Most participants were not representing funders and there were discussions about the critical need to **engage with funders** in a proactive and productive way, communicating the impact of their decisions in funding requirements, specifically the impact of reduction of operational support and unrestricted funding, inconsistency of guidelines, and complicated requirements (even with the Missouri Common Grant Form). It was stated that nonprofit leaders need to work with the philanthropic community to create greater impact with limited resources.

COMMENTS

"Honor and recognize nonprofit staff"

"Increase convenings that are simple and cheap/ free so that multiple staff from agencies can attend"

"Create nodes of strength"

"Bring back community"

WHAT ARE THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES

The conversations around resources reached beyond money to include **education**, **advocacy**, and **access to and awareness of national models of best practices**.

Education topics identified primarily for professional staff were evaluation (impact evaluation and program evaluation), brand identity, storytelling, "sales" training, forecasting and analysis, forming and maintaining collaborations, collecting data/database, lobbying, and general professional staff development. Participants stated that there is a need to build the next generation of nonprofit professionals, paying attention to current middle managers.

Advocacy resources with specific training for nonprofits (staff and board) as well as how to advocate with different audiences, and how to access information to successfully advocate. There was discussed a need for a "business case" for the economic impact nonprofits provide to the overall state economy.

Participants identified a need for access to and awareness of national models of best practices and easily available information related to data, forecasting, sophisticated analysis techniques, examining the economic impact of the sector and the workforce, technology, HR practices and shared resources. In Kansas City, there was an acknowledgement of the value of partnering with institutions of higher education to access information, research, and students.

Columbia participants expressed the idea that resources to improve and deal with issues reside within their staff and organizations and can and should be tapped to support and learn from each other, acting as "efficiency consultants" for the sector.

COMMENTS

"Creation of one big story that meets nonprofit organizations' needs"

"Talk to people who we don't agree with"

"Takes a village"

"Communicate the results of these whistle stops"

"Get ready to roar"

WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM NONPROFIT MISSOURI?

Participants identified three areas of focus: advocate, provide resources/information related to advocacy and best practices of nonprofits, and communication to support Missouri nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit Missouri should provide resources, such as state bill tracking and data for advocacy campaigns. There is a need to collect and distribute information about the sector itself, the economic impact, advocacy best practices, and to craft the broad common sector message/story. NPMO should act as a catalyst to convene organizations or funders, coordinate advocacy efforts around the state, organize a legislative Nonprofit Caucus, and more publicly be the voice and face of the sector. In Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis there was lively discussion for Nonprofit Missouri to organize a "virtual shut down" of the sector – how many people, families, communities, animals and our environment would be left hungry, homeless, without services, music, art, recreation, education, and healthcare.

? NEXT STEPS:

Nonprofit Missouri is grateful to all participants for their input, suggestions, creative ideas, and identification of priorities. The Whistle Stop Listening Sessions provided valuable and implementable input for the Board of Directors. Each of the main ideas identified as needed by the organizations align with Nonprofit Missouri's current mission. The Board has committed to moving this agenda forward by incorporating the priorities into our strategic planning process over the next three months. Clear action steps with implementable and measurable goals will be developed and shared. Whistle Stop participants will be invited to participate in the process. Nonprofit Missouri will begin by reiterating the priorities that were expressed throughout the tour.

ACTION STEPS

- Advocate for the sector and for the needs of organizations
 (including advocating to philanthropic and regional/local government entities)
- Provide resources/information related to advocacy and best practices of nonprofits
- Communicate to support the organizations



THANKYOU

Nonprofit Missouri is a volunteer led organization. Its Board of Directors could not have convened six listening sessions over 8 weeks without the support and collaboration of local and state partners.

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ATTENDING ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES

Adansonia, LLC

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Asthma & Allergy Foundation St Louis

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CABA

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Community Blood Center

Community Council of St. Charles

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Community Living, Inc.

Community Mediation Services, STL

Connecting For Good

Connections to Success

Convoy of Hope

Council of Churches, Springfield

Country Financial

Coyote Hill Christian Children's Home

Cristo Rey Kansas City High School

Delta Center for Independent Living

Discovery Center

DMW Fundraising

Donnelly College

Drumm Farm Center for Children

E.A.R.S.

Ellsworth Collaborative, LLC

EnergyCare

Epworth Children & Family Services

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

Experience on Demand

Family Health Center

Fathers' Support Center, St. Louis

First Hand Foundation

Francis Family Foundation

franksheroes.org

Front Porch Alliance

Gateway Greening

GoodMap

Goodwill

Gordon Parks Elementary School

GRACE (Giving Resources Among

Children Everywhere)

Grant Professionals Association

Great Rivers Environmental Law Center

Greater Kansas City Coalition to End

Homelessness

GTLM Inc.

Guadalupe Centers

Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis

Happy Bottoms

Healing & Mending Ministry

Health Care Foundation of Greater

Kansas City

Health Literacy Media/ Nonprofit Missouri

Heart of Missouri United Way

Horizon Housing Foundation -

Practicum Student

iBossWell, Inc.

IFF

Immigrant and Refugee Women's

Support Services

Insight Partners Consulting

Isabel's House

Joi Brown Consulting

Julia Davis Branch Library

Kanbe's Markets

Kansas City RU

Kansas City Southwest Clinical Society

Kirkwood/Webster SRT

KU School of Social Welfare

Life Network of Central Missouri

LifeBridge Partnership

Lindenwood University Plaster School of Business & Entrepreneurship

_inkStL

Lutheran Senior Services

Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV)

Midwest Nonprofit Leadership and Management, University of Missouri

-Kansas City

Merrill Lynch/Bank of America Mid-America Library Alliance

Missionmapping, LLC

Missouri Foundation for Health Missouri Public Charter School

Association

MO Attorney General Mutare Network, LLC

My Life Clinic

National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis

ND&S Management Company

North East Communiy Action Corporation (NECAC)

New Chapter Coaching

Newhouse

Nonprofit Connect Nonprofit Missouri

North Newstead Association North Side Community School

NPMO Board of Directors

Nurses for Newborns

O'Donnell Communications

Operation Food Search

Ozark Counseling Center

Ozarks Food Harvest

PedNet Coalition

People's Community Action

Corporation
PKJ Consulting

Plastic Problem LLC Ready by 21 St. Louis

Resources for Human Development

Rocket Science Consulting
Saint Louis Mental Health Board

Schonfeldt Consulting

Senior Peers Actively Renewing Knowledge (SPARK)

Serving with the Badge

Sherwood Forest

St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO)

Social Innovation St. Louis

Sophia Project

Southwest Center for Independent Living

Springfield Arts Council

Springfield Ballet

St. Paul's Lutheran College Hill

St. Charles City-County Library District

St. Charles Outreach Coalition Against Human Trafficking

St. John Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

St. Louis Black Film Festivals

St. Louis Life

St. Louis Public Library

Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service

Support Kansas City, Inc.

TargetText

Teen Pregnancy & Prevention

Partnership

The Empowerment Network, Inc.

The Light Foundation

The Pregnancy Care Center

The Rome Group

The South Cabin Group LLC
Thomas Dunn Learning Center

UAAME

University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Social Work

Union Health Associates

Union Station Kansas City, Inc.

United 4 Children

United Services for Children

United Way of Greater St. Louis

University of Missouri - St. Louis

University of Missouri Extension

Urban Strategies, Inc.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Foundation

VOYCE

Walnut Park Empowerment STL

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks

Wesley House

Women's Foundation of Greater St. Louis

Wornall/Majors House Museums

YMCA of Metropolitan St. Louis

Youth and Family Center

Youth Empowerment Zone

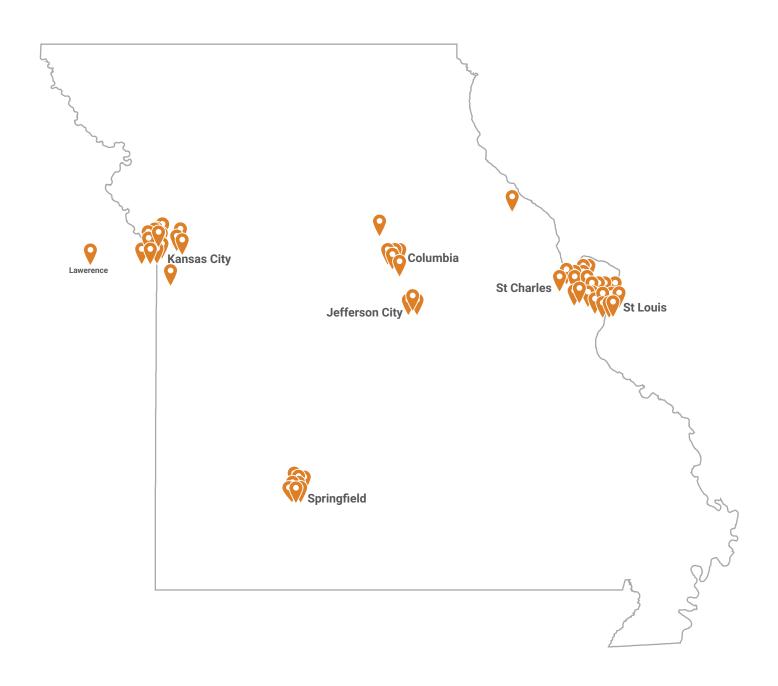
Youth In Need

YouthBridge Community Foundation

YWCA Metro St. Louis

We apologize if we missed any attending organization. This list was formed to the best of our knowledge.

MAP OF ATTENDING ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES



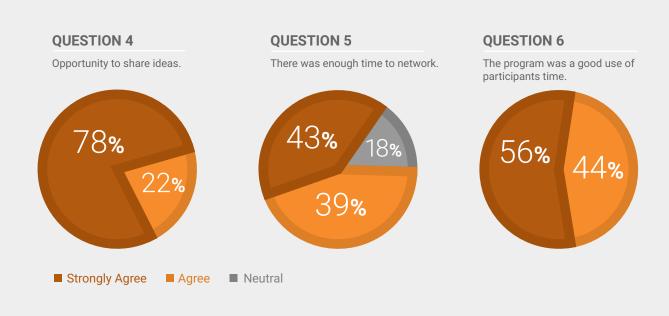
SURVEY RESULTS

A workshop satisfaction survey was distributed at each session and then mailed to everyone who both registered and attended. A total of 75 responses were collected, including six returned online after the session. Question #1, as to whether the program was well organized, with an N78, 59% (44) strongly agreed and 41% (31) agreed. Question #2, as to whether participants were satisfied, 52% (38) answered strongly agree and 48% (35) answered agree. Question #3 asked about the facilitators' communication, 70% (52) strongly agree and 30% (22) agree.



SURVEY RESULTS CONTINUED

Question #4 asked if there are opportunities to share ideas, 78% (59) strongly agreed and 22% (17) agreed. Question #5 received the most mixed response, asking if there was enough time for networking with 43% (31) strongly agreeing, 39% (28) agreeing and 18% (13) were neutral. Question #6 asked if the program was a good use of participants' time, 56% (40) strongly agreed and 44% (32) agreed. The four open ended questions were asked again on the survey, and the responses were included in the summaries above.







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