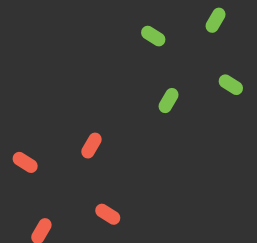
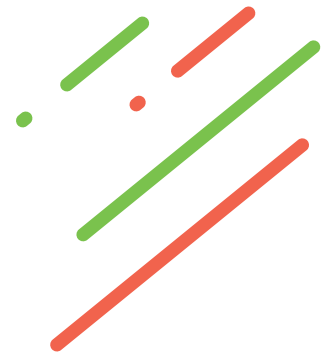




CENTRAL TEXAS NONPROFIT CAPACITY SURVEY 2024 REPORT

mission^x
CAPITAL





▶ CONTENT

- 1 Background and Purpose
- 2 History of the Process
- 4 Key Findings: Quantitative & Qualitative Data
- 20 Acknowledgements
- 22 Connect With Us



▶ BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE



For over 20 years, [Mission Capital](#) has been serving nonprofits in Central Texas. We spark progress from within individuals, cultivate community, foster organizational sustainability and maximize opportunity and impact across the nonprofit sector through collaboration, leadership development, customized trainings, strategic consulting and pushing the boundaries of our sector's culture.

Driven by our Board of Directors in response to our CEO transition in late 2022, there was a desire to more deeply understand the value of our organization and services in the Central Texas social sector.

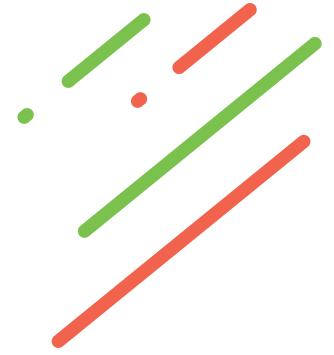
As we brought our staff together in conversation about what this might look like, there was a real commitment to move away from extractive information-gathering and expanding this work to something that exists beyond Mission Capital.

In thinking about what would be most meaningful for the sector overall, we wanted to understand gaps in capacity, learning, programming, and identify how we and other Central Texas organizations can best support each other.

Our hope is that the efforts of our team and the wealth of participation from Central Texas nonprofits will allow us to work together more effectively, across sectors and with each other, to strengthen our collective impact.

In understanding the heart of the challenges and opportunities our sector is facing, we want to foster connections that will lead to more creative problem-solving, increased resources and capacity, and convene larger conversations with the intent of strengthening the sector overall.

▶ HISTORY OF THE PROCESS



When we began conceptualizing our survey in March of 2023, we knew we wanted to more deeply understand the challenges and opportunities present for our Central Texas nonprofit community. We also wanted to create something that could bolster our collective ability to work together, understand trends in the sector, and increase our sector's overall capacity.

We began working as staff to understand specifically what we were hoping to capture with this survey. By March 2023, our larger vision for the work was to focus on five main topics to understand the needs of our sector: organizational capacity, systems and management, programs and impact, community engagement and investment in growth.

Forming a more concentrated internal team, we knew we couldn't create this work in a vacuum, and feedback from community was a top priority. By the end of May 2023, a final draft of

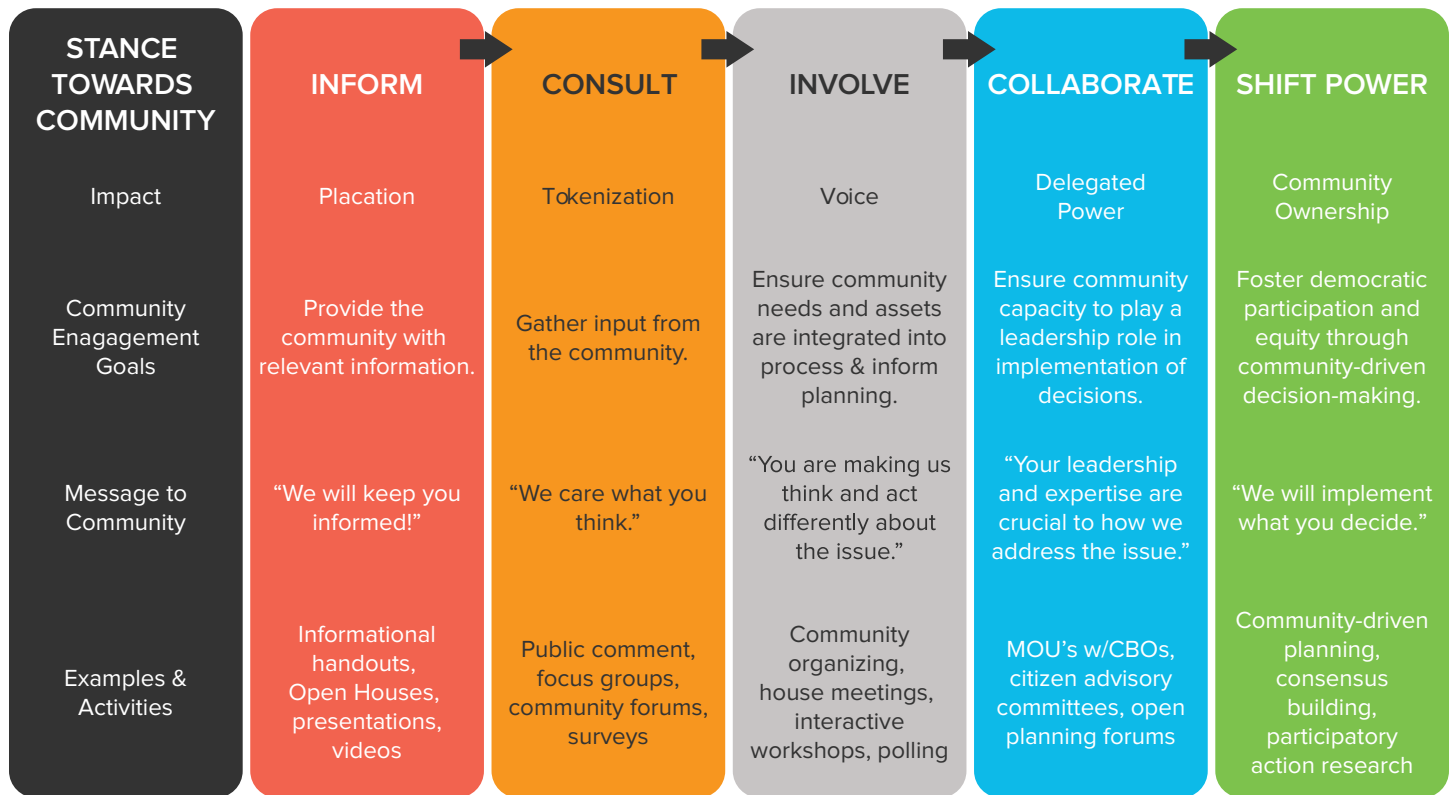
the survey was completed, and we piloted the survey with external organizations to get their feedback for clarity, relevance, and potential impact. Taking their feedback, we finalized the survey throughout the summer.

In early August of 2023, we were prepared to launch the survey with our community. We officially began accepting responses on August 7, 2023, and invited respondents to opt into a raffle to win access to Mission Capital resources, a free training or membership.

Our survey closed on August 31st, 2023, with 216 respondents. It became clear through our initial analysis of feedback that some respondents may have understood questions or concepts differently than we intended, which led to concerns about taking this initial analysis as representative of the collective Central Texas nonprofit experience.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM



Adapted from: International Association for Public Participation (2018) & Movement Strategy Center (2021)

Using the Community Engagement Spectrum (above) we recognized that our initial analysis existed largely in the Consulting phase, centered on gathering input from the community and understanding it on our own terms.

Given the potential for varying interpretations of survey material and the desire for deeper community involvement in this work, we made the decision to partner with [Capacity Catalyst](#), a nonprofit organization committed "to improve data use in the social sector by connecting capacity with need for a thriving equitable social data ecosystem".

They led Mission Capital and survey respondents through seven Community Sensemaking Sessions.

Using the most significant change methodology, fifty total participants were given ten to eleven open-ended responses to the survey at random to review and pull what they felt were the most present narratives and themes from their reviewed responses.

They worked individually to complete this analysis, and then as small groups shared the themes they found, identifying those most common and supported as most significant.

From the sessions, collective themes were developed, and stories were identified that most represented the experience of respondents.

▶ KEY FINDINGS: QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE DATA

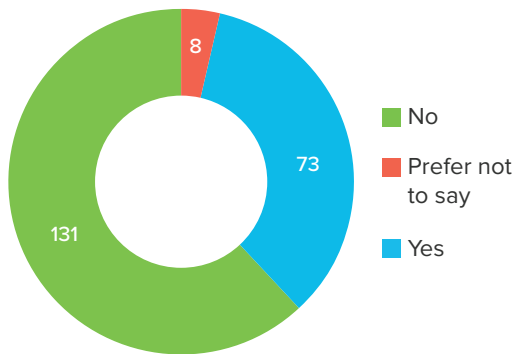


Note about the data: percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

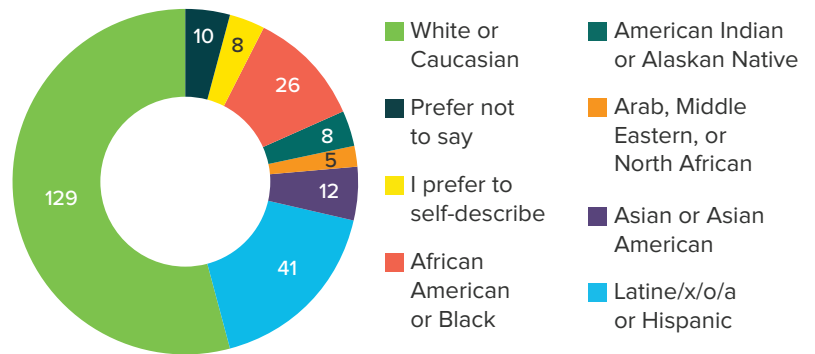
○ DEMOGRAPHICS

Reported here as the number of respondents in each group. Note: not all respondents shared demographic information.

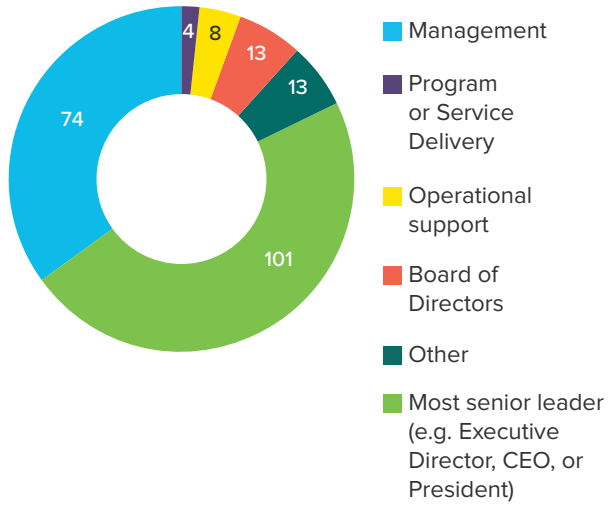
Do you identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or a Person of Color?



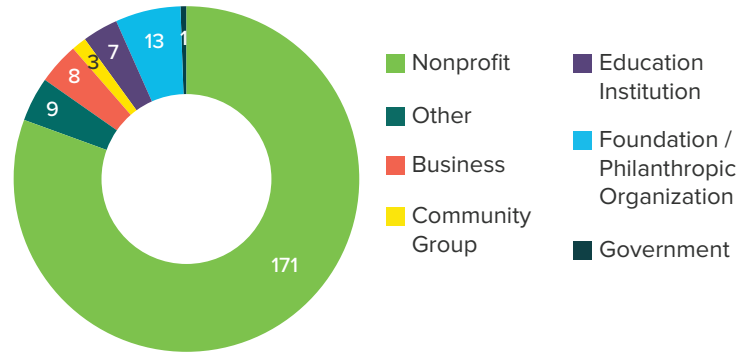
**What is your race?
Check all that apply.**



Please identify which type of position best describes your role in your organization.

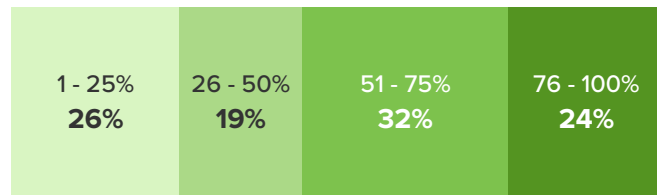


What type of organization do you represent?



CAPACITY

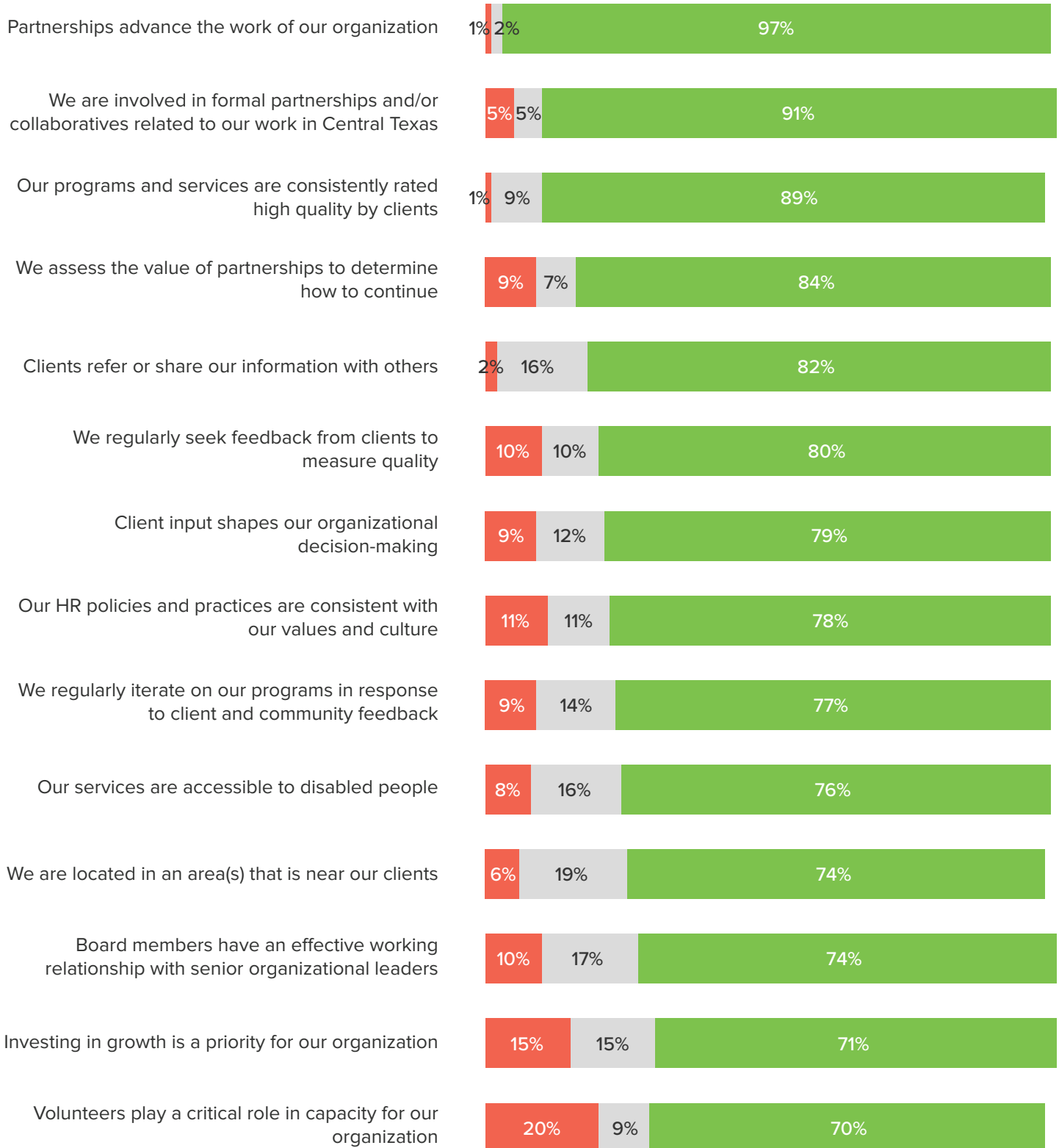
What percentage of your intended client/population do you have the capacity to serve?

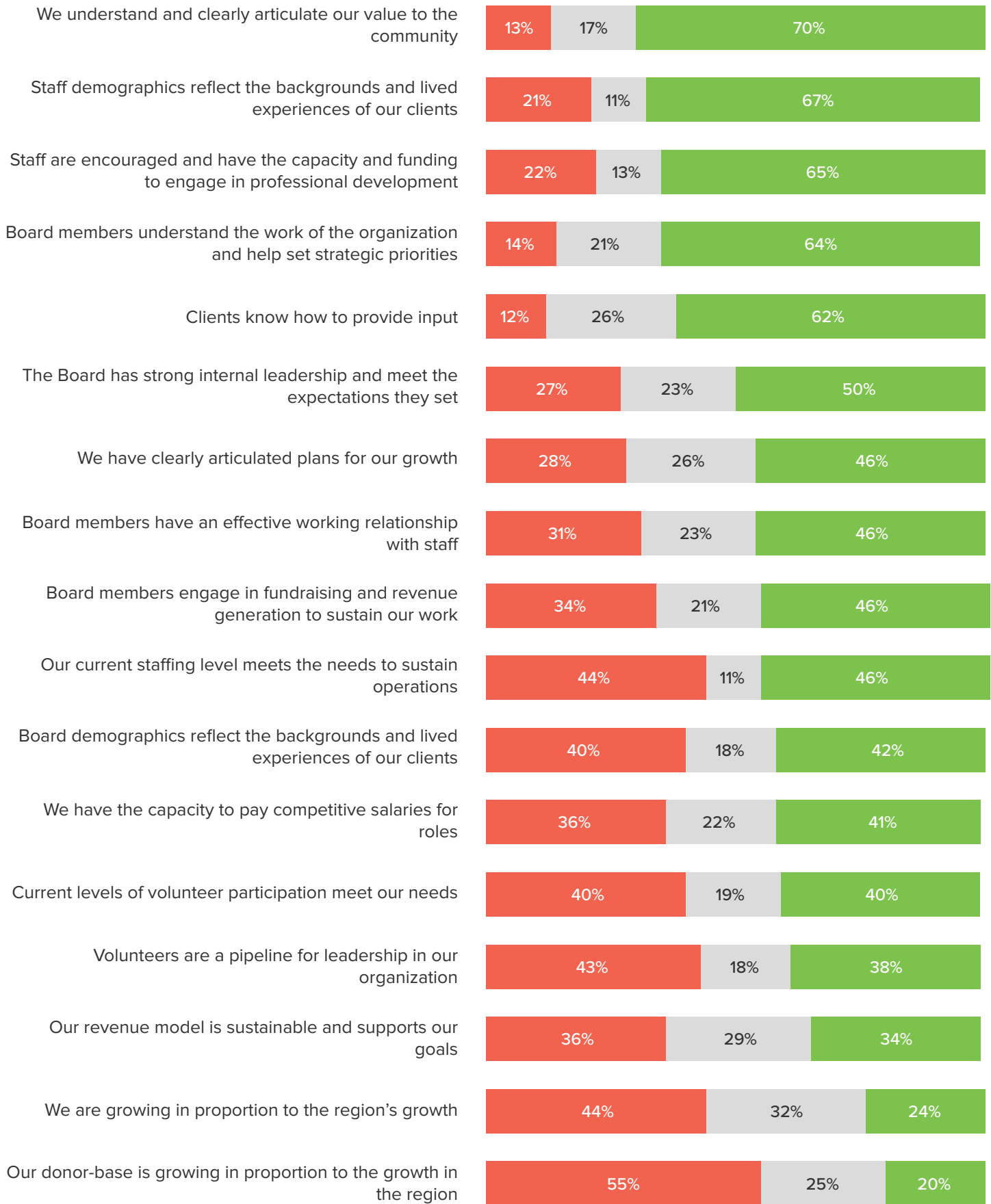


OVERALL STATUS

Statements rated on a 5-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. All status statements from the survey are presented here—from highest percentage of positive response to lowest percentage of positive response.

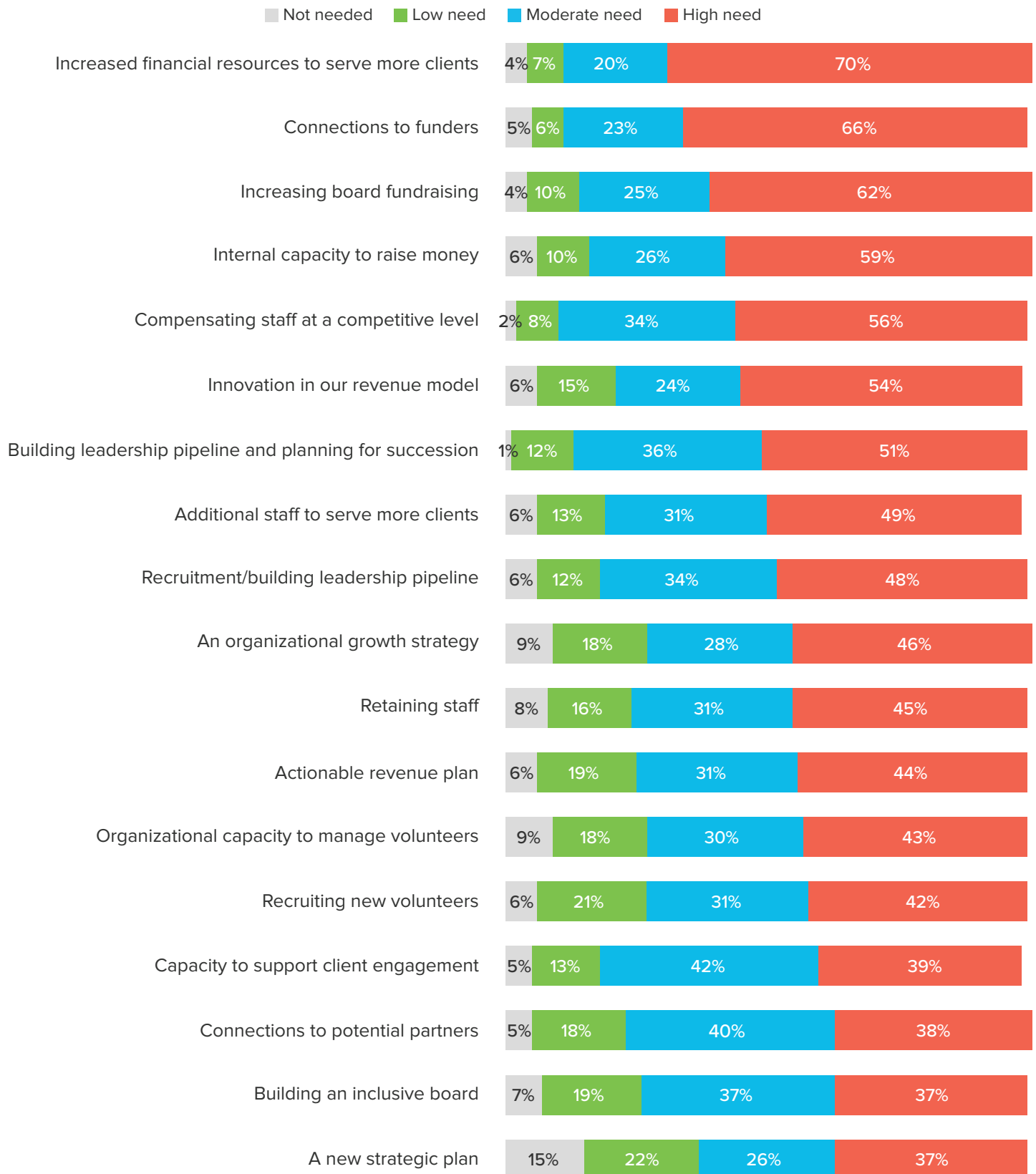
■ Disagree/Strongly Disagree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Agree/Strongly Agree

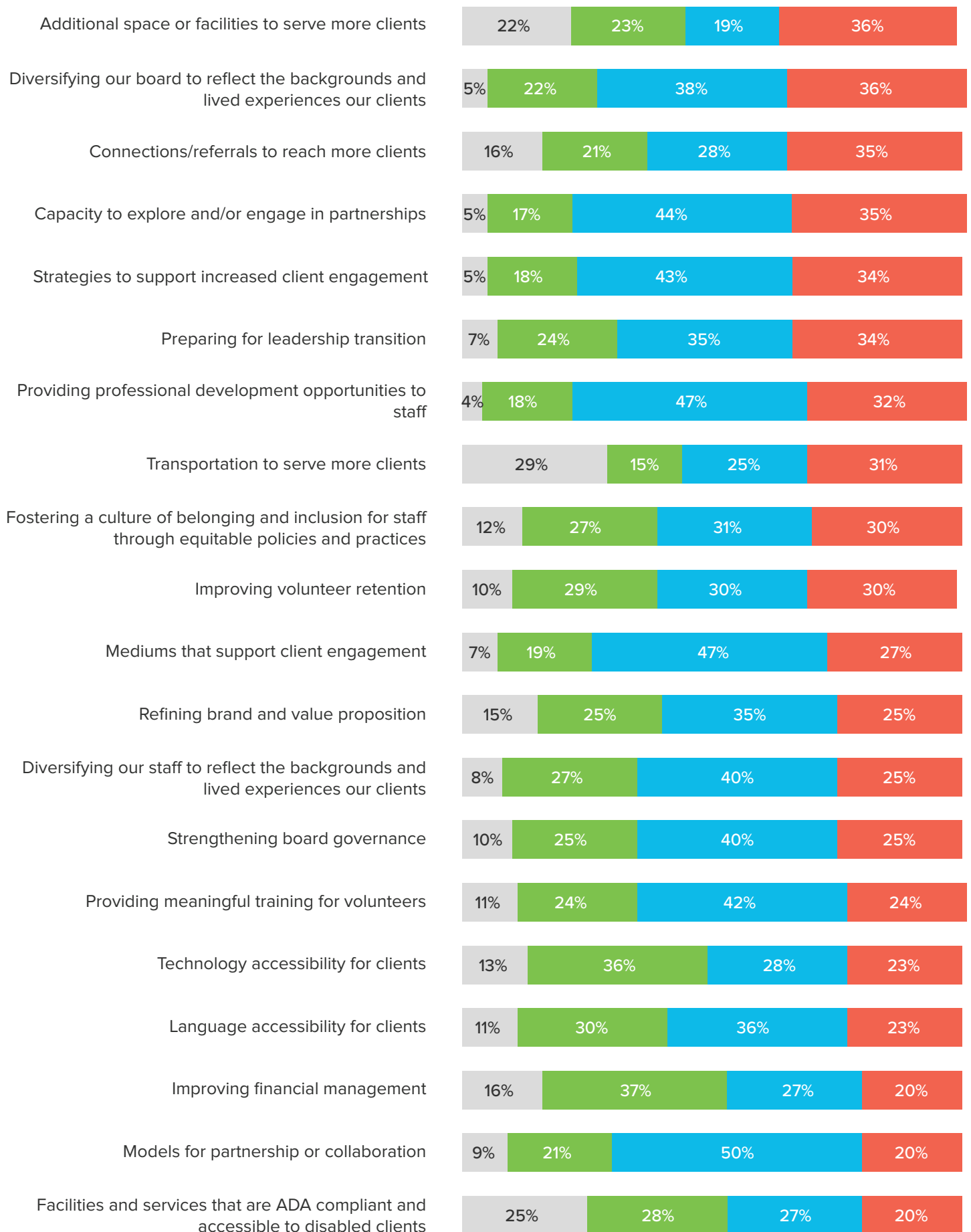




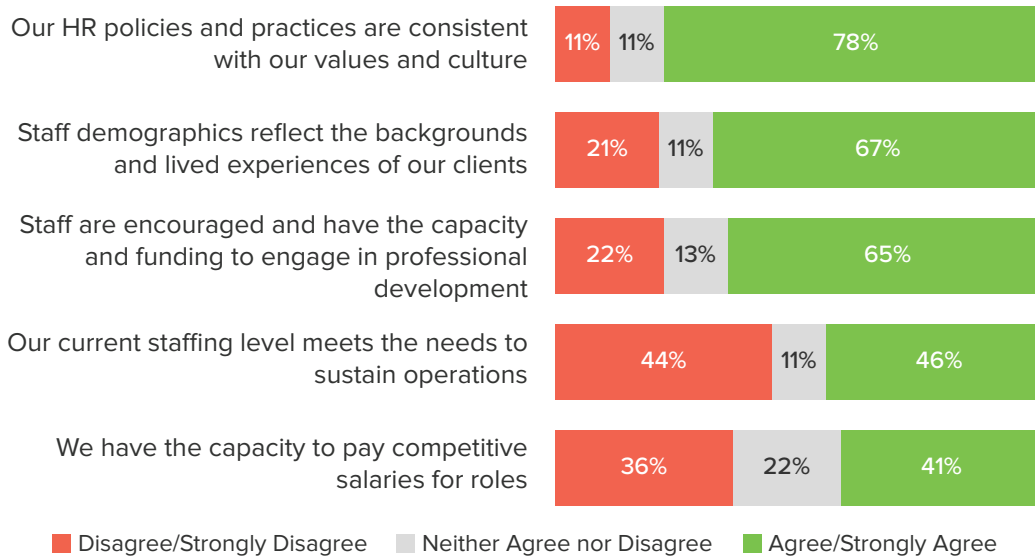
OVERALL NEEDS

Statements rated on a 4-point scale from Not Needed to High Need. All need statements from the survey are presented here—from the statement most frequently chosen as a high need to the statement least frequently chosen as a high need.





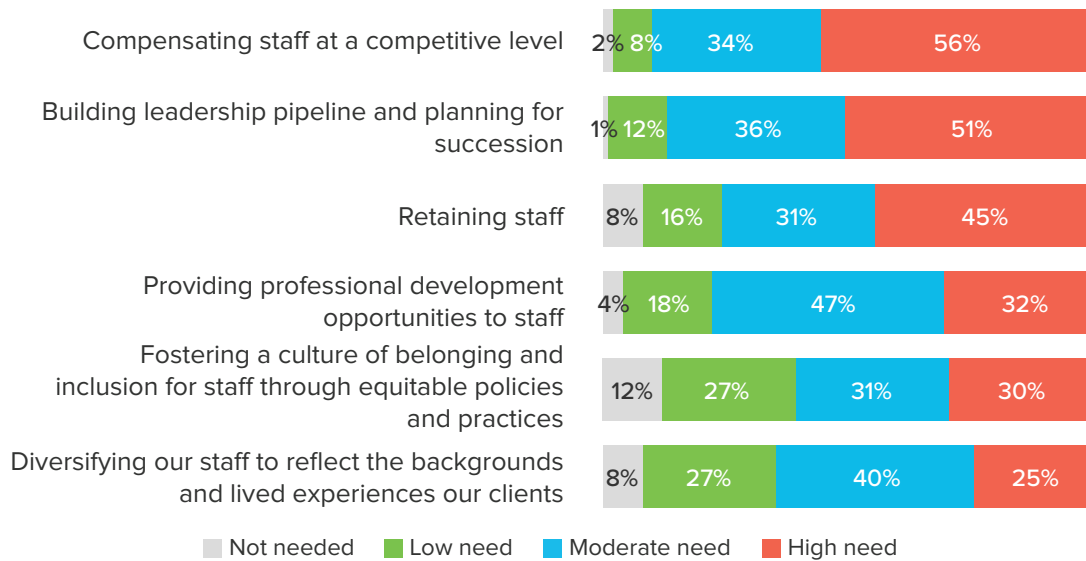
STATUS



“ We are at an inflection point and rather than continue to promote structures that oppress staff and the meaningful work they are trying to do (despite their own fear, concern, and trauma) we need to champion new and more progressive models of organizational leadership...”

If we truly want to create change and help people there is no other way. Anything short of reinvention is an effort to repeat the current failures. ”

NEEDS

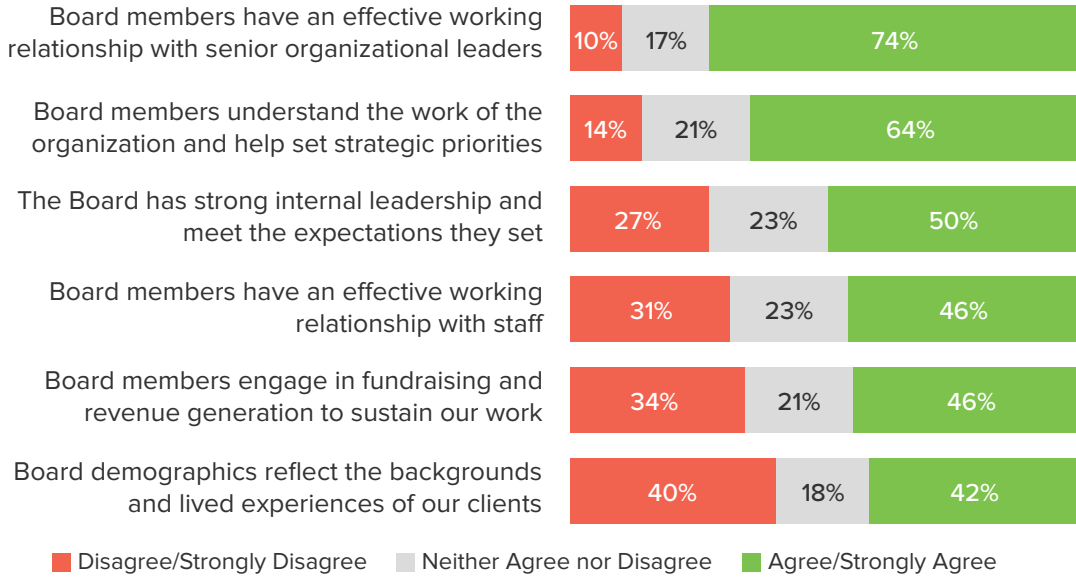


“ Retention struggles are real; competitive wages are not just a desire, they are a necessity. ”

“ While we have enough staff to meet current and near-term demand, our staff backgrounds are not as reflective of the communities we serve as we’d like. Our HR policies and practices are not as up-to-date as I’d like, but we’re progressing well.

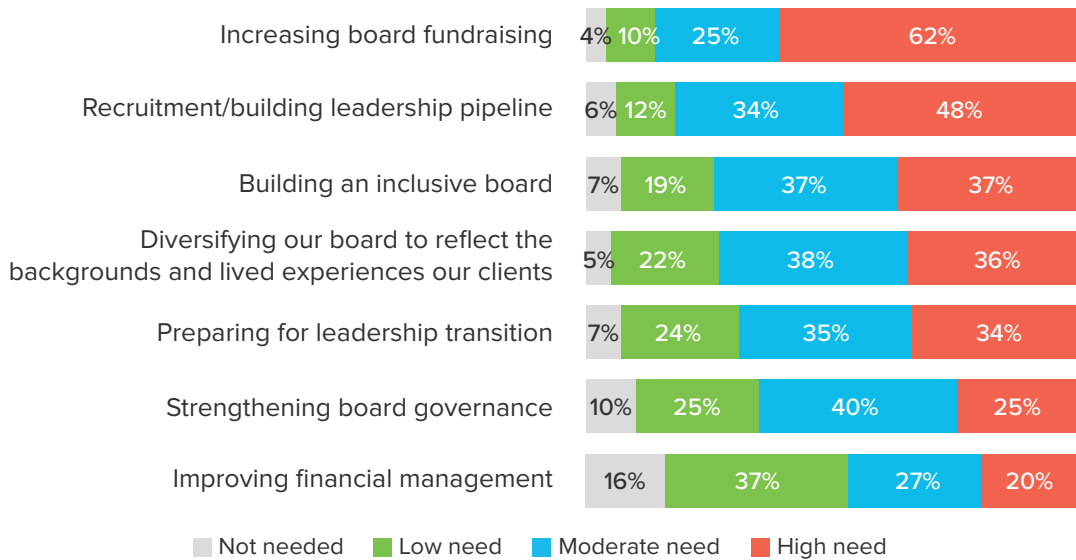
We are technically able to pay competitive salaries, but we’d like to pay our people what we know they’re worth and help raise the average salary for nonprofit professionals in Austin. ”

STATUS



“ Currently our CEO is the only staff who attends our Board meetings, and other staff are discouraged from attending. Strategic planning is done with only minimal initial input from staff. ”

NEEDS

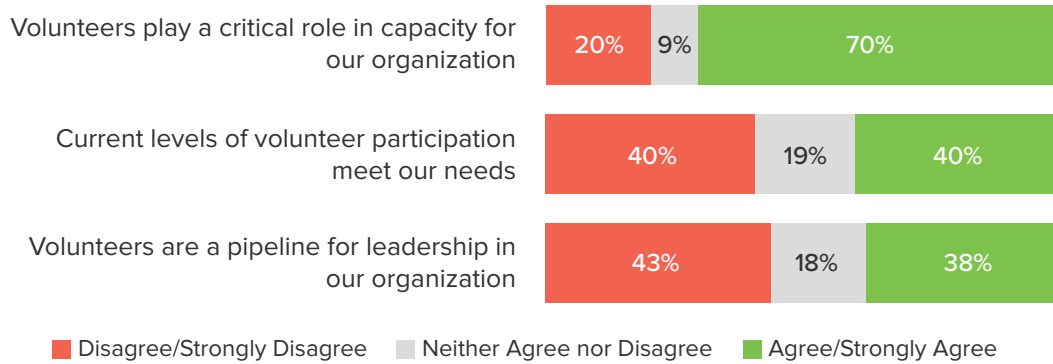


“ Most of our board members represent companies that make significant financial contributions, which makes them less motivated to look for outside funding. ”



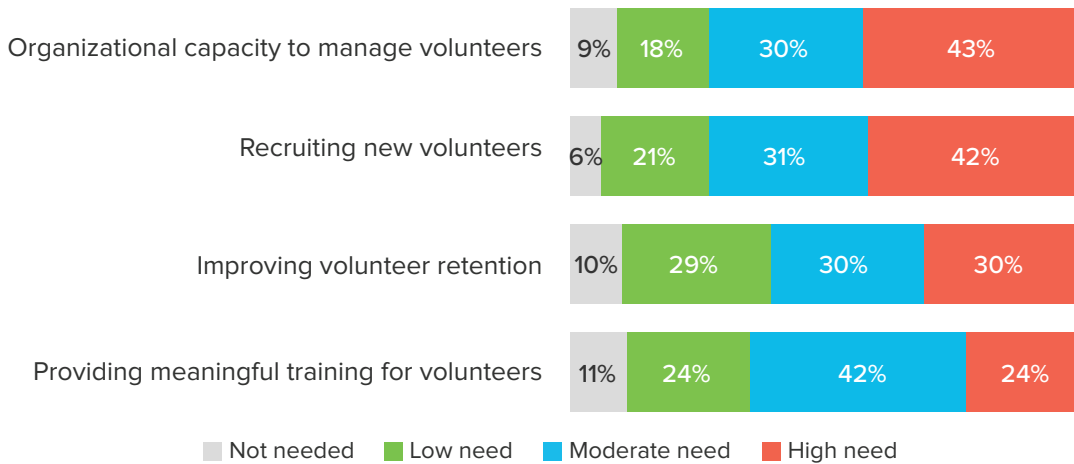
VOLUNTEERS

STATUS



“ We have access to volunteers but haven’t found the time or capacity to manage them or give them meaningful tasks. ”

NEEDS



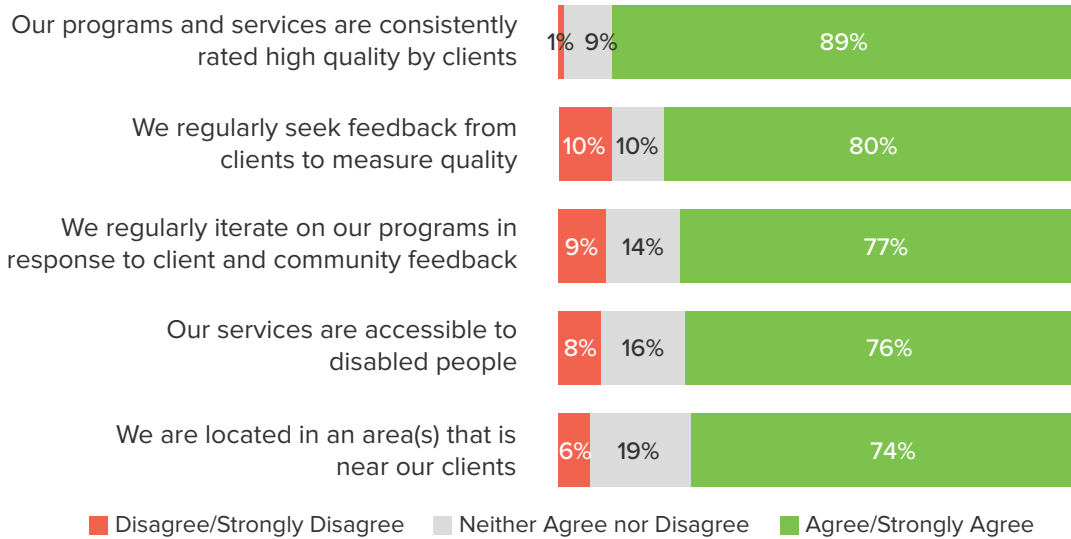
“ Many people of color cannot afford to volunteer. Volunteering costs money and nonprofits need to be in a place to pay for expenses for volunteers. This is a serious disconnect in efforts to diversify. ”

Most nonprofits rely on volunteers for board recruitment. If this pipeline is primarily white (which it is for most orgs.) then it’s a set up for an all white, wealthy board. If we want boards to reflect the clients they serve, we need to deal with the financial reality of clients and the volunteer pool we seek. ”



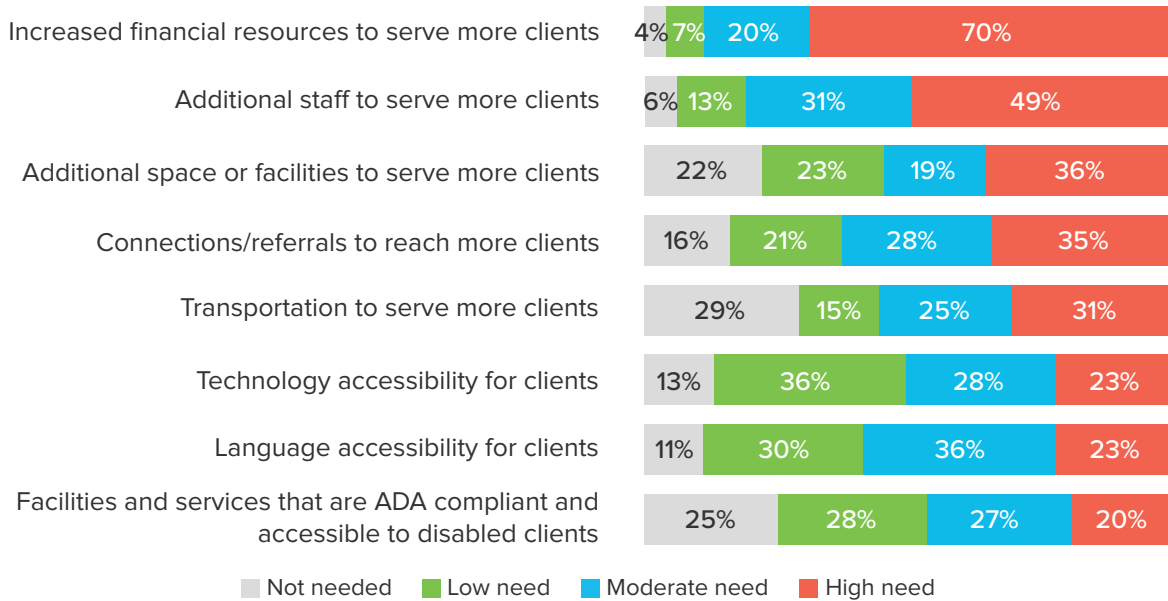
PROGRAMS

STATUS



“ We do not see growth as an objective in and of itself. We are interested in developing revenue models that live our values and can be sustainable and support our goals. ”

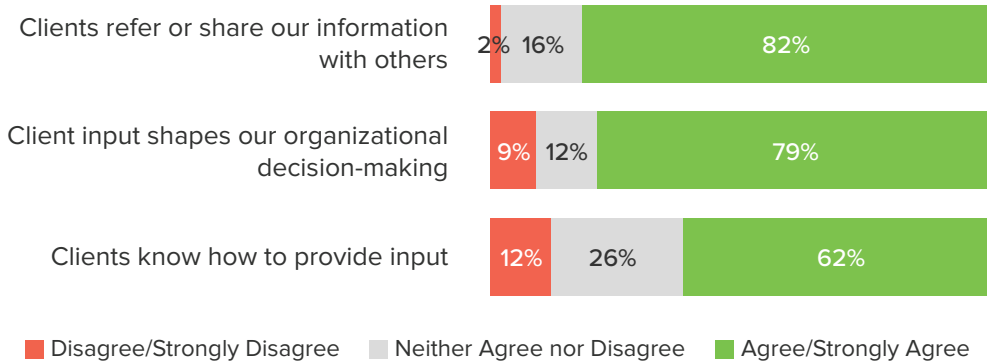
NEEDS



“ We have a population that is diversifying geographically and we have great opportunity to engage this population as long as we can have the financial resources to do so. ”

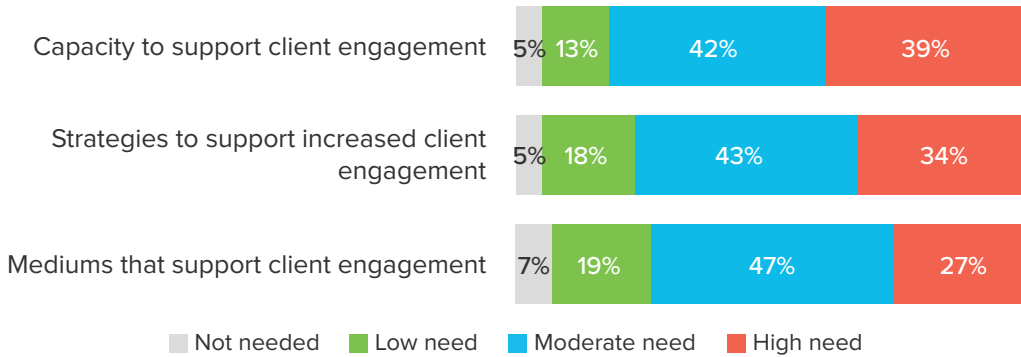


STATUS



“ Most client input comes from the most outspoken clients or ones who feel most comfortable with our leadership. ”

NEEDS



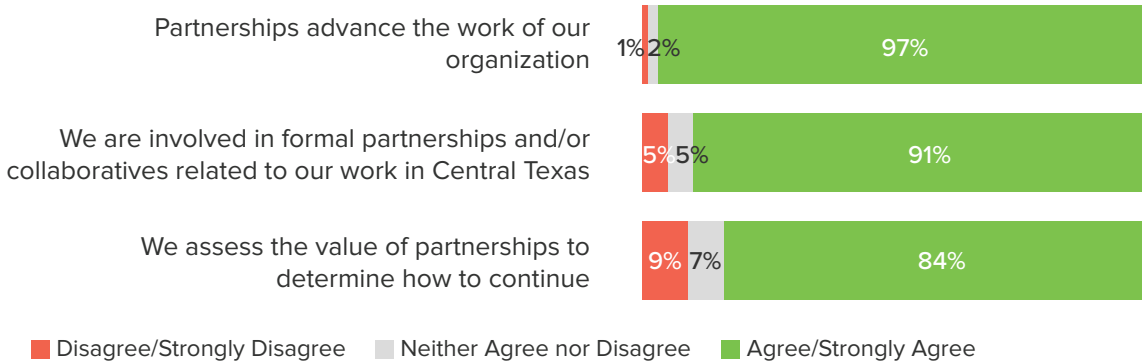
“ Our community needs a better system in which clients can have an easy entry point to navigate ‘the system’ and nonprofit staff can refer with confidence. ”

“ We have many more clients who are speaking languages other than Spanish or English (19 languages and dialects). We hire translators and utilize a translation company to meet their needs. However, demand is increasing. We have more clients than we can serve right now including waitlists for several programs. ”

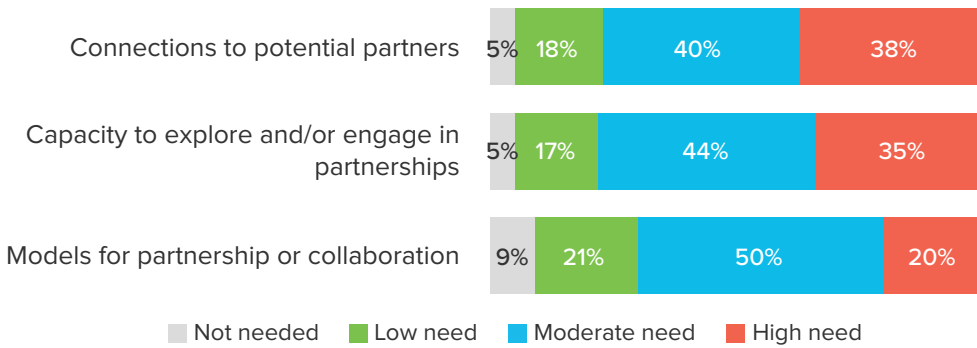


PARTNERSHIPS

STATUS

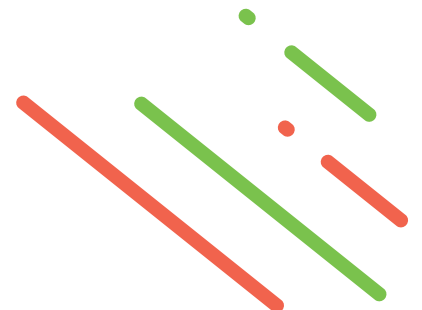


NEEDS



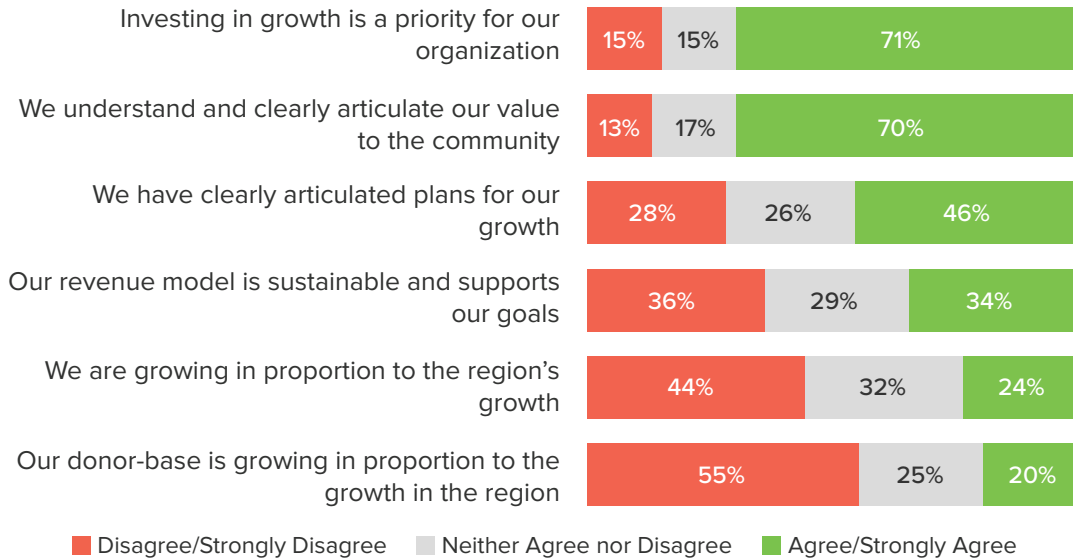
“ There is an overage of nonprofits and I think we could all work together. ”

“ Nonprofits are one sector of the multi-sector approach to solve our biggest community issues. Nonprofit professionals growing as leaders need to experience working with these different sectors (business, higher ed, government), building relationships, and identifying solutions to test and scale. ”



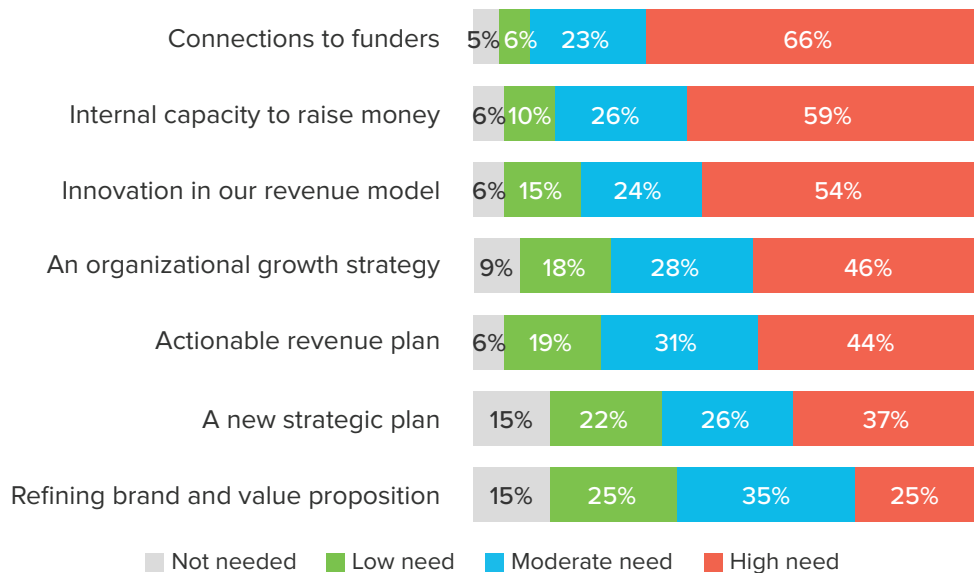
FUNDING

STATUS



“ More people would be served with more funding, staff, and materials. Running out of funds to help families feels like shortchanging them; their hopes hit a brick wall and problems remain. ”

NEEDS



“ We have great plans for growth. However, the one area that seems to be lacking is how to raise funds for salaries. Most grants do not want to provide for operations. ”

“ We need funder collaboratives that are truly about racial, economic and other forms of justice. ”

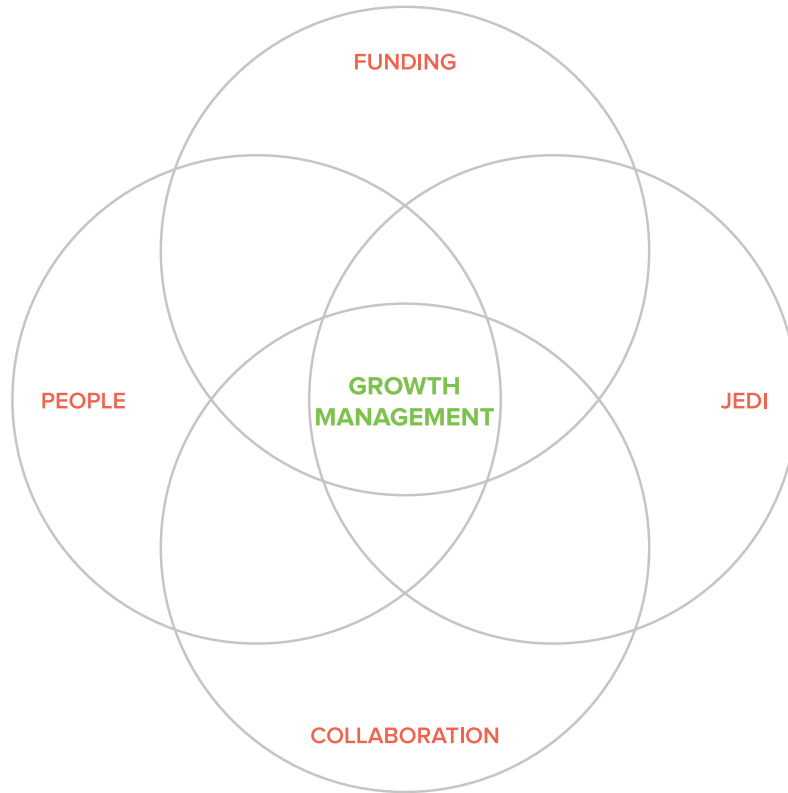
“ Traditional funding sources (foundations) are seeing increased requests for funding and have implemented new guidelines that limit grant amounts or require agencies to skip funding for 1 year.

This is limiting growth and even reducing the size of programs. In addition, multi-year government contracts are stable and do not account for cost of living, inflation, or increased competition for highly skilled staff. ”

EMERGING THEMES

Through analyzing the data and hosting Community Sensemaking Sessions, we identified the most significant pain point present in the responses – challenges around managing growth.

Four themes uncovered roll up into this overall challenge: funding, people, collaboration, and JEDI (justice, equity, diversity and inclusion).



∴ FUNDING

Priorities for funding centered around anti-racism and accountability in funding, staff retention and paying livable wages to those who work to make our sector what it is.

“ We need more funding to hire more staff to serve the ever-expanding demand for our services. ”

Challenges emerged around the need for increased funding due to the demand for services, as well as, funding sources that have

remained flat and have gone unadjusted to account for inflation and cost of living.

There was also a concern about funding being allocated to larger, more established nonprofits and the need to invest in smaller and community-led organizations.

“ Our survival depends on securing long-term funding that allows us to plan ahead and innovate, rather than just survive. ”

:: PEOPLE

As it relates to people, key needs include funding for competitive wages regarding staff retention, challenges include the ability to invest in high-quality professional development for their teams, developing leadership pipelines and prioritizing succession management and engaging board and volunteers, along with staff.

“ We need better training opportunities for board members to encourage successful work teams. ”

“ The nonprofit sector in Austin and elsewhere struggles intensely with Executive Director and CEO leadership. ”

:: JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION (JEDI)

Equity opportunities for organizations in the Central Texas sector include expanding our definition and implementation of equity to include disabilities and other demographics beyond and including race equity.

“ Diversity in leadership is not just about fairness; it's about enriching our perspectives and effectiveness. ”

“ In the sector and community, recognizing and honoring voices that may not have had a platform previously could shift the sector and community to prioritize all voices and perspectives not just particular roles or positions. ”

Developing diverse leaders, collective interest and action to increase diversity, made possible by increased resources for equity work, is a priority as well.

“ True inclusivity means embedding diversity into every layer of our organization, from staff to board to the communities we serve. ”

“ Over the past year, the Executive Director has made many attempts to walk back any decision-making authority from the DEI committee and cut the budget in half. Opportunities for equity feel pretty bleak. ”



∴ COLLABORATION

One of the more overarching themes that arose was collaboration – both in terms of systems and services. How can smaller nonprofits collaborate or merge into larger groups for added resources?

“ Through collaboration, we multiply our insights and our impact, achieving more together than any of us could alone. ”

How can we host and support convenings to create open dialogue and increase our collective power for impact?

Collaboration to increase access for the communities we serve via organizational partnerships, referrals and resources, along with the potential for increased funding for impact from similar donor bases were ideas that our sector shared to strengthen our work.

“ Collaboration will be the best opportunity for us to improve our programs in the sector for now. ”

∴ GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The theme that was the most pertinent and expanded throughout each of the previously mentioned priorities was growth management.

In each of the themes shared here, a central pain point was challenges related to scaling – how can funding continue to support the growth of our organizations regarding staff and services, how can we more deeply support our staff and their personal and professional goals?

“ As we expand, aligning our growth with strategic goals and community needs becomes increasingly challenging but essential. ”

“ Internally, we need to make sure that our plans for investment and growth center the needs of the communities we have yet to serve. ”

∴ FINAL THOUGHTS

Considering the feedback, we've received through the survey and our Community Sensemaking Sessions, we want to continue to collaborate with the sector to move conversations around overarching topics forward.

In the early Summer of 2024, Mission Capital is hosting a virtual and in-person gathering to share the feedback we received and our analysis to review feedback and forge a path forward together to continue the conversations that emerged from this work.

▶ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



First and foremost, we want to thank those in central Texas who took the time to respond to our survey – thank you for sharing your stories and experiences with us.

We could not have completed this work without the thoughtful contributions of many staff, partners, and community members. Thank you to the entire Mission Capital team, including team members Kyle Gugel, Chelsea Hartness, Jordan Ely, Emma Finkbone, Katelyn Lowrey, Deborah Barker, and Kim Caldwell of Giant Squid Group who spent time designing, iterating, learning, and bringing this survey to life.

Thank you to Katie Popp who supported much of the initial analysis of survey feedback. We are grateful to Capacity Catalyst, who partnered with Mission Capital in facilitating our Community Sensemaking Sessions to advance a more community-owned understanding of the feedback we received.

We would like to thank community members who attended these sessions for their time spent reviewing feedback and sharing more of their own:

- Aaron N. DeLaO, VP, Impact, United Way for Greater Austin
- Chris Earthman, Aragona Family Foundation
- Claire Frankenfield, Mission Capital
- Dan Leal, CEO, Seedling Foundation
- Darriana Donegan, Capacity Catalyst
- Deborah Barker, Mission Capital
- Diana Mil, Maxwell Locke & Ritter LLP
- Dr. Cathy Jones, Executive Director, Austin Partners in Education
- Elly Tai, Mission Capital
- Emma Finkbone, Mission Capital
- Hays County Food Bank
- Jennifer Carter, Chief Mission Officer, Goodwill Central Texas
- Jill Henderson, Founder & President, The Bakari Foundation
- Johanna Stahl-Mandel, Executive Director, Capital City Village
- Jordan Ely, Mission Capital
- Karl Nichols, Vice President of Investor Development, E3 Alliance
- Katelyn Lowrey, Mission Capital
- Katie Bell-Moore, Women in Neuroscience
- Katie Storey, Senior Manager for Community Engagement & Learning, Mission Capital
- Kim Caldwell, Strategic Consultant, Giant Squid Group
- Kristen Huguley, Ten House Strategies
- Kyle Gugel, Mission Capital
- Laura Gomez-Horton, Clinical Director, YWCA Greater Austin
- Leah Turner, Board Member, Mission Capital
- Malisa DiGiacomo, Special Projects Assistant, SAFE Alliance
- Melissa Harner, Central Texas Program Manager, Healing Hands Community Doula Project

- Mia Johns, Executive Director, Dress for Success Austin
- Michel Hudson, CFRE, CEFL, Owner, 501(c)onsulting
- Rebecca Farrell Ewing, PhD
- Saro Mohammed, Capacity Catalyst
- Serita Lacasse, Executive Director, Senior Access
- Stephanie Lane, Executive Director, ICC Austin

We also want to thank those not listed that participated in the sensemaking session. We deeply appreciate your time analyzing the survey findings and engaging in community conversations.

Thank you to Dr. Rosamaria Murillo of El Buen Samaritano and Dr. Cathy Jones of Austin Partners in Education who supported this work early on by reviewing a draft survey, providing feedback and helping us ensure excellence in our work.

To all our partners who supported us in distributing this survey – we thank you for sharing this work and for all the good you do in central Texas and beyond:

- OneStar
- One Voice of Central Texas Leadership
- Piper Stege Nelson, Executive Director, I Live Here I Give Here
- Raul Alvarez, Executive Director, CAN

An additional thank you to all of the other partners not listed that supported this work by sharing out with their partners in the community.

▶ CONNECT WITH US



Mission Capital hopes that this information sparks discussion and deep reflection about the needs facing nonprofits in Central Texas. We hope this report can be used to bring forward new ideas, approaches, and supports to ensure that our nonprofit community has the resources it needs to thrive.

If you're interested in continuing the conversation around these or other themes that can bring access to our community, reach out to us.

info@missioncapital.org
missioncapital.org

