The Non-Profit Learning Center

The Sherwood Trust
Walla Walla Community College
The Learning Center Story

- The Learning Center represents a collaboration between the Sherwood Trust and Walla Walla Community College.
- The purpose is to provide on-going training, resources, and education to current and prospective board members and staff of nonprofits on current and challenging issues.
- This will allow participants the opportunity to form peer networks that foster sharing and collaboration among local members of our nonprofit community.
- The survey allowed all non-profits and their Boards the opportunity to provide input into future topics and issues that they are currently facing.
- 53 surveys were received, including 50 written comments.
- All data are summarized on the following slides.
Top Line Findings

- The challenge of funding and fundraising generated the most comments followed by the need to attract quality board members.
- People recognize the need for collaboration among organizations but are challenged to make it happen.
- There is a recognized need for community input as organizations seek to validate their mission, work and programs.
- While the survey generated more agreement than disagreement in how things are working, the biggest challenges are in planning, board recruitment, and governance.
- Surveys and assessments of the board, the organization and programs do not happen with as much regularity as needed given the comments acknowledging the need for that input.
Questions 9 and 10 – Comment Summary
(Responses cross all participant groups)
Q 9/10 – Please share the biggest challenges you face in your organization; Anything else we should know

• **Funding/Fundraising**
  – Dependency on the state budget
  – Finding new funding sources
  – Reduction in funding from major sources
  – Huge increase in unfunded government compliance requirements
  – Not enough money
  – Not enough information about the nuts and bolts of fundraising
  – Fundraising (x5)
  – Funding to expand and add programs to more effectively fulfill our mission
  – Adequate funding (x3) to implement strategic plan
  – Need to find funding and grow the organization so that we can afford staff
  – Lack of adequate financial resources needed to pay enough staff
  – Financial stability
  – Establishing a plan for sustaining financial support
  – Program development and funding
Q 9/10 – Please share the biggest challenges you face in your organization; Anything else we should know

• Board/Volunteers
  – Lack of board participation exemplified by lack of quorum, prohibiting moving ahead with items in a timely manner
  – Have had board members on for years…it is time for a change though not sure there is a supply of new, willing members
  – Board is very dedicated
  – Finding new board members
  – Recruitment of sufficient number of volunteers
  – Would like increased representation for 30-40 year olds as well as younger than 30
  – Recruiting working board members
  – Volunteer board will eventually burn out
  – Board members have to do some of the day-to-day decision making and tasks
  – How to get more people involved as a board member
  – Board diversification beyond token board members
  – Volunteer recruitment
  – Staff and volunteer time to participate in community initiatives
  – Specific training on being an effective board member
Q 9/10 – Please share the biggest challenges you face in your organization; Anything else we should know

• Organization Capacity/Governance
  – Being sustainable, especially if we grow/add locations
  – Growing from start up to established organization and attracting staff to fill that growth
  – Deciding about small agency structure and the role of the ED
  – Enough staff to carry the mission farther in the community (requires money that is difficult to find currently)
  – Lack of capacity and will to engage or undertake initiatives at more than a cursory level
  – Specific training on being an effective ED of a board

• Operations
  – Establishment of, adherence to, and periodic review of written policies and procedures and dissemination of the policies on a continuous and timely basis
  – Knowing and understanding how a nonprofit operates vs. a private business, e.g., tax issues, financial recordkeeping, etc.
  – Implementing a program to insure the success and longevity of the organization
  – Clear communication and effective delegation of responsibilities are lacking from time to time in the organizations that I volunteer for
Q 9/10 – Please share the biggest challenges you face in your organization; Anything else we should know

• Community Involvement/Needs/Feedback
  – Obtaining reliable and accurate information from the community regarding what they expect of our organization and are we meeting those expectations
  – Actively engaging with the community on a continuing basis to build relationships and meet concerns
  – Best utilize the skills and passion of board members to develop strategic planning and policy development that will aid our organization in moving forward with programming and community engagement
  – It would be nice if we had the community resources to develop a validated and accurate way of learning what our community wants. We’ve done town hall meetings, retreats and email based surveys but response rates are small and selective which confounds our ability to interpret the results of these activities

• Collaboration
  – Although agencies are engaged and “collaborate” (attend meetings, share ideas), it is difficult to remove silos and encourage individual programs with similar missions to adopt a system of service delivery
  – Everyone understands the need to create a system and share resources, but at the end of the day there is still a lot of competition for funding
  – I think that community needs may be met more efficiently if service non-profits could network more efficiently
  – A peer exchange opportunity to discuss non profit operational issues, fundraising, etc.
Q 9/10 – Please share the biggest challenges you face in your organization; Anything else we should know

- Nonprofit Learning Center
  - I look forward to participating the learning center and thank Sherwood Trust and WWCC for sponsoring
  - The learning center is a great idea
  - This (survey) is a great tool
  - …my wonderful experience being part of this year’s Sherwood Trust Leadership Training program – keep up the good work
  - Thank you for doing this
Survey Data Summary
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: I am:

- 16 Executive Directors
- 14 Board members
- 3 Board President/Chair
- 20 Other, please specify
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Meetings:

- Board members attend meetings regularly: 13 strongly agree, 8 agree, 2 disagree, 2 strongly disagree.
- Board members are prepared and ready to participate at meetings: 23 strongly agree, 29 agree, 5 disagree, 2 strongly disagree.
- There is a clear process for conducting discussions and making decisions at meetings: 21 strongly agree, 21 agree, 4 disagree, 2 strongly disagree.
- The meeting agenda clearly states the purpose and process for each agenda item; e.g., discussion, action, information sharing, decision-making: 15 strongly agree, 15 agree, 1 disagree, 1 strongly disagree.
- Meetings are conducted in an effective and efficient manner: 16 strongly agree, 16 agree, 2 disagree, 2 strongly disagree.
- The board President is comfortable addressing problems with board members if need be; e.g., attendance, conflict, etc.: 9 strongly agree, 21 agree, 12 disagree, 1 strongly disagree.
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Governance

The board president, board members, and executive director are clear about their respective roles, responsibilities...

All board members understand the mission of the organization.

The board understands its personal liability and legal responsibility.

We have set procedures for electing board members and officers, and for staggered terms of members and limits.

There is an orientation program for new board members that includes roles, responsibilities, expectations, programs, finances, etc.

There are clear descriptions and expectations for all board committees.

There is a board assessment evaluation on an annual basis.

The board spends its time developing and setting policies for the organization rather than day to day operations.
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Board Recruitment

Board Recruitment

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

There is a nominating committee or process that develops criteria for recruiting and selecting new board members, based on the current needs of the board.

There is a board matrix that features current skills by board members as well as needed skills for recruiting future board members.

We are able to attract capable people who want to be on the board.
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Fundraising/Financials

- **We have a fundraising plan with assigned responsibilities and accountabilities for board and/or staff.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 0
  - Disagree: 1
  - Agree: 20
  - Strongly Agree: 18

- **Responsibilities are clear between staff and the board as to fundraising accountabilities.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 3
  - Disagree: 12
  - Agree: 18
  - Strongly Agree: 21

- **The board actively participates in a variety of fundraising activities.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 8
  - Disagree: 3
  - Agree: 11
  - Strongly Agree: 15

- **The board is comfortable and willing to ask for money if needed.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 1
  - Disagree: 12
  - Agree: 8
  - Strongly Agree: 18

- **The board understands its responsibility for ensuring that the organization has sufficient financial resources to conduct its operations.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 1
  - Disagree: 3
  - Agree: 23
  - Strongly Agree: 22

- **All board members understand the financial reports and balance sheets so that they are comfortable asking questions.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 2
  - Disagree: 20
  - Agree: 11
  - Strongly Agree: 3

- **We have established internal controls necessary to safeguard the organization’s finances.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 1
  - Disagree: 2
  - Agree: 12
  - Strongly Agree: 3
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Personnel

1. All staff have defined tasks and objectives and know how they will be held accountable. (23 strongly agree, 21 agree, 14 disagree, 0 strongly disagree)
2. All staff receive annual reviews and ongoing feedback. (4 strongly agree, 2 disagree, 0 strongly disagree)
3. We have written personnel policies that are shared with all staff. (17 strongly agree, 11 agree, 1 disagree, 0 strongly disagree)
4. All policies and handbooks are reviewed regularly to ensure legal compliance. (21 strongly agree, 0 agree, 2 disagree, 0 strongly disagree)
5. All staff have written job descriptions. (2 strongly agree, 0 agree, 0 disagree, 0 strongly disagree)
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Programs

- **Our organization evaluates its programs based on specific measurements and makes change(s) as needed.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 4
  - Disagree: 22
  - Agree: 14
  - Strongly Agree: 2

- **We regularly survey stakeholders to make sure our programs are meeting their needs.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 12
  - Disagree: 22
  - Agree: 10
  - Strongly Agree: 10

- **We include non-board members of the community on program committees.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 4
  - Disagree: 6
  - Agree: 18
  - Strongly Agree: 28

- **The community is aware of our program services.**
  - Strongly Disagree: 4
  - Disagree: 6
  - Agree: 18
  - Strongly Agree: 22
The Learning Center for Nonprofits: Planning

- We have a strategic plan that guides our programs and decisions: 20
- All operating and strategic plans specify who is accountable and responsible for implementation as well as measurable criteria for success: 14
- Our planning process includes surveys and/or assessments of key stakeholders and the community’s future needs: 21

Responses:
- Strongly Disagree: 8
- Disagree: 10
- Agree: 18
- Strongly Agree: 3
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