West Marin Fund
our coastal community foundation

Status of West Marin Nonprofits: Survey Results 2024

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Content

About the West Marin Nonprofit Survey

Initial impetus (2020):

- Understand how West Marin nonprofits were faring during the pandemic

Ongoing purpose:

- Provide information to West Marin nonprofits on how they are collectively faring
- Help funders and policymakers provide nonprofits with the best possible support
- Identify organizational trends
- Address distinct topics in alternating years (e.g., programs/services in odd years, financials in even years)

Surveys to Date:

- Summer 2020
- May/June 2021
- May/June 2022
- May/June 2023
- July/August 2024

2024 Survey Methodology

Administration dates: Pilot in July 2024; full deployment in August 2024

Data collection: Alchemer online platform

Instrument:

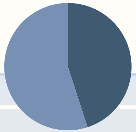
- 30 main questions (combination of multiple choice, numeric fill-in, narrative short answer)
- Adapted/updated items from previous West Marin Nonprofit Surveys
- Added new questions
- DEIJ questions drew on Equity Organizational Self-Assessment (Michigan State University, 2018) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Spectrum Tool (Meyer Memorial Trust, 2018)
- Topics of focus: Financials; Fundraising; Planning, monitoring, and evaluation; Collaboration; DEIJB; Emergency response

Analyses: Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis

Survey Response Rate, 2024

85
organizations*
invited to take
2024 survey

38
organizations
completed surveys**



45%
response
rate

The number of organizations responding to the survey has been relatively consistent over the past 4 of 5 years (2020: 50, 2021: 37; 2022: 32; 2023: 38, 2024: 38).

* Both legally constituted organizations and fiscally sponsored groups are referred to as "organizations" in this report.
** Three additional organizations submitted a partial survey.

Summary of Findings

Respondent Profile

Profile of Respondents:

- Over three quarters of 2024 respondents (78%) reported 501(c)(3) status.
- All West Marin regions are being served by at least two thirds of respondents.
- No respondent reported the following as either their primary or secondary issue area: nutrition education, sustainable food production, economic opportunities, worker rights and wellbeing, transportation, and Internet access.
- Some traditionally marginalized populations are a primary focus of multiple organizations, while others are not.
  - Latinx families, low-income families, and seniors/older adults are each a primary focus of 20%-24% of respondents.
  - Other BIPOC families/BIPOC people in general, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQI+, and veterans are each a primary focus of no respondents or just one respondent.

Financials

- The majority of respondents (57%) had gross income under $250K in calendar year 2023.
- The majority of respondents (54%) had net positive net income in the $1 to <$100K range in 2023.
- Overall, responding organizations were in a better place financially in 2022 than in 2023.
  - Median gross income **declined by 28%** from 2022 to 2023.
  - Median net income **declined 72%** from 2022 to 2023.
- 100% of respondents reported individual donors as an income stream in 2023, and 42% of respondents' gross income came from individual donors that year.
- Among organizations that provided data in 2022 and 2024 surveys (on calendar years 2021 and 2023, respectively):
  - Individual donors/gifts showed no or virtually no change with respect to the percentage of respondents reporting this funding stream and the percentage of income that the stream represented.
  - Marin County funding and earned income showed increases in the percentages of respondents reporting the stream and the percentage of income that the stream represented.
- In 2024, 76% of respondents reported currently having a reserve, 12% an endowment, and 7% a line of credit.
  - 17% have no source of financial protection.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Fundraising

- Most nonprofits do not have specialized staff or consultants to lead fundraising.
  - Only 13% have a development or fundraising director or manager.
  - For most organizations, fundraising responsibility falls on the executive director (33%) or board (33%).
  - No one reported that a contracted fundraiser (individual or company) had primary responsibility.
- The majority (73%) agreed that they have a clear fundraising strategy in place, and a similar proportion (70%) agreed that they regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their fundraising strategies.
- More than half (63%) agreed that they have made progress diversifying their funding sources, but only 10% strongly agreed.
- 60% agreed that they feel confident about being able to raise funds they need this year, with 35% strongly agreeing.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Planning, Monitoring, & Evaluation

- West Marin nonprofits most frequently have current versions of financial documents, including an annual financial report, annual budget, and profit and loss statement—each 83%-85%—and a financial plan (51%).
- Tools for which organizations have made less progress are community needs assessment, organizational theory of change, HR strategy plan, and organizational theory of change — only 15%-22% have a current one and 20%-29% are developing one.
- The vast majority of respondents (87%) consider M&E efforts to be integral to their work, but they often lack fundamental M&E tools or practices or desired alignment with funders.
  - 76%* somewhat or strongly agreed that M&E is a new concept for their organization.
  - Only 12% have a current institutional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan; 22% are developing one.
  - Just under half (47%) disagree that their staff have the knowledge and skills to conduct M&E successfully.
  - The same percentage (47%) disagree that they regularly use M&E learnings to improve their work.
  - Around three quarters want funders to have M&E requirements that are more realistic and that are better aligned with nonprofits' priorities.

*Percentage is 77% on later slide due to subcategory rounding.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Collaboration

- The majority of organizations (58%) are optimistic about the value of collaboration, despite two thirds agreeing that applying for funding as a collaborative is difficult.
- For all potential benefits of collaboration examined, the majority of respondents (54%*-100%) reported having benefitted “a lot” or “somewhat.”
  - Collaborations have benefitted respondents “a lot” in enhancing community relationships (83%), deepening their understanding of issues (74%), increasing reach (66%), and improving services (63%).
- Collaborations have benefitted respondents “a little” or “not at all” in accessing more funding (34%), becoming more efficient (34%*), and influencing policy (46%*).
- Large majorities of respondents agreed that they would like to learn more about how to collaborate effectively with other organizations (90%), would like funders to provide more support to foster collaboration (83%), and would benefit from additional technical assistance on how to collaborate more effectively (70%).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DEIJB

Overall, organizations continue to make progress in DEIJB. However, collection of demographic data has shown the least progress.

- In 2024, mission, goals, and objectives including a DEIJB commitment showed the most progress, with 33% reporting "fully in place" and 43% reporting "making good progress."
- Among nonprofits responding to both the 2023 and 2024 surveys, the percentages reporting practices "fully in place" approximately tripled or more for:
  - Strategic plans/action plans focus on promoting DEIJB (13% to 38%);
  - Engagement of members of groups experiencing inequities to design programs/services (8% to 29%);
  - Design of programs/services to meet needs/preferences of members of groups experiencing inequities (8% to 33%); and
  - Outreach to members of groups experiencing inequities (8% to 38%).
- In 2024, 33% reported not collecting demographic data on team and board, and the same percentage reported not collecting demographic data about populations served.

Additional Findings

Emergency Response:

- The vast majority of respondents (90%) reported not shifting resources to emergencies in 2023.
- Among respondents that did shift resources, two did so for emergencies with their buildings, one did so for COVID and fire/smoke, and one did not report the reason.

Technical Assistance: Nonprofits have considerable interest in technical assistance.

- 71% for finances
- 85% for increasing fundraising capacity
- 76%* for strategic planning and/or M&E
- 70% for how to collaborate more effectively with other organizations
- 75% for DEIJB

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