



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Assessment of Capacity Building to Strengthen New Mexico's Nonprofit Sector

February 27, 2018

The New Mexico Association of Grantmakers, on behalf of a coalition of New Mexico funders is seeking consultant services to conduct a landscape study of New Mexico's nonprofit capacity building needs, services, strengths and assets, which will include recommendations for funding, resources and options for infrastructure organizational models. The recommendations will serve as the foundation for an implementation plan to improve capacity services for New Mexico's nonprofit sector. The time-limited (six month) capacity building landscape analysis will consist of four major components:

1. A literature review of best practices, lessons learned and review of other funder nonprofit capacity building initiatives and infrastructure models in other states
2. An assessment of capacity-building needs unique to New Mexico's nonprofit sector
3. A landscape scan of existing nonprofit capacity building services and resources in New Mexico
4. Recommendations on how New Mexico nonprofits, funders, and capacity building providers could work together towards improved capacity in the sector

INTRODUCTION

New Mexico funders have a vested interest in ensuring that the statewide nonprofit sector has the information, support and resources required to operate in an efficient and effective manner to meet the needs of the people and communities they serve. Nonprofits also need to be able to access those services and resources for local capacity building to improve their performance and impact. Capacity building services can be organized most efficiently through a coordinated system or network of infrastructure support organizations, but the need, quality, value and distribution of those services in New Mexico are not clear. As the number of New Mexico nonprofit organizations has grown over the past decade, there is a need for more information and data on the impact of, and ongoing needs for, capacity-building in the sector. Funders and other stakeholders would like to know where and how improvements in capacity building funding can be made if we want a stronger more resilient nonprofit sector.

To address these concerns and to inform funders and the broader sector, a core Capacity Building Funder Group* led a planning process for conducting a landscape analysis, an independent study assessment of New Mexico's statewide nonprofit capacity building infrastructure. The study will include a literature review, statewide nonprofit capacity building needs and resource assessment, with recommendations for approaches to support access to a stronger network of high quality capacity building services. In addition to statewide nonprofit associations, academic centers, and funder driven nonprofit resource centers, a number of other innovative and non-traditional models and regional approaches for capacity building have evolved across the U.S, which will also be included in the landscape analysis.

Capacity building is an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of nonprofit organizations. However, looking at capacity building infrastructure from a statewide perspective can be complex. For example, nonprofits in rural areas generally have fewer resources and greater challenges and technical assistance for urban nonprofits is vastly different from nonprofits in rural areas. Communities vary in their own unique history of solving problems through their nonprofit service providers and leaders. Therefore, capacity building itself is heavily context dependent. Funders themselves may contribute to the complexity by creating a patchwork approach to capacity building at the local and statewide levels. Fortunately, we have good national research that supports what a well-functioning nonprofit capacity building infrastructure requires. And, we also can point to good models in other parts of the county. We hope to learn from this analysis and other's experiences to adapt and optimize a viable capacity building framework that recognizes all of New Mexico's unique characteristics.

New Mexico nonprofits, funders, and capacity building providers have highlighted a number of challenges over the years in building the capacity of the nonprofit sector. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of coordination of capacity building resources and services
- Lack of data that demonstrate the need, value and distribution for capacity building services, and that identify potential gaps
- Disparities in the quality of capacity-building services and lack of tools or standards to benchmark quality
- Variance in nonprofits' ability to assess their capacity building needs, identify appropriate capacity building resources, and pay for needed services
- Disparities between nonprofits in rural vs. urban areas with regard to capacity building needs and resources

BACKGROUND

The nonprofit capacity building landscape analysis is a project of the ***Capacity Building Funders Group***, a group of 17 foundations that invest in capacity building for nonprofit organizations in New Mexico. For more information on the history and funders involved, see the project description. The outcome of this

work will help to unite funders, nonprofits and capacity building providers and coordinate efforts for increased nonprofit capacity in New Mexico. The funder coalition would like to accomplish this goal with a clearer understanding of the current capacity building landscape that has been researched and analyzed by an independent and experienced professional(s).

The New Mexico Association of Grantmakers (NMAG) serves as the fiscal sponsor for this project, a Regional Association composed of funders with giving programs in New Mexico. Established in 1991, NMAG's mission is to increase the effectiveness and impact of organized philanthropy in New Mexico with a vision to catalyze philanthropic leadership, spark collaboration within the funder community and improve coordination between philanthropy and other sectors.

The funder coalition will form a Nonprofit Landscape Study Steering Committee, who will participate in selecting the consultant and advise on the overall project. The Committee will consist of approximately 10 - 15 leaders from New Mexico grantmakers and non-grantmaking nonprofits, statewide capacity building groups, management support organizations including fiscal sponsors, academia, consultants, and volunteer organizations.

SCOPE OF WORK

We are seeking a qualified individual, group of professionals or organization who will conduct this landscape analysis and make recommendations for improving the coordination, availability and effective access to high-quality capacity building resources.

Goals of the project include, but are not limited to:

- Identify from a literature review and other similar studies, what are the best practices and recommendations for a high quality nonprofit capacity building service sector (including leadership, governance, program evaluation, resource generation, management and other recommended services for optimal capacity building and nonprofit effectiveness.)
- Identify what is unique to New Mexico's nonprofit sector and how such best practices and recommendations could be adapted in New Mexico.
- Identify and scan, possibly through an asset map, the existing capacity building resources, services, strengths, and gaps in New Mexico.
- Identify and compare what capacity building supports nonprofits need, and how those needs differ in New Mexico, including the resource gap between those in rural and urban areas.
- Provide recommendations for funders on how they can more effectively allocate new or existing dollars to improve capacity building resources in New Mexico.
- Provide recommendations for capacity building providers so that they can better serve nonprofits.
- Provide recommendations for the optimal strategies or structures that would have the highest potential for achieving the goal of increased nonprofit capacity in New Mexico.

The scope of services will include:

- A comprehensive literature review on nonprofit capacity building best practices, and regional infrastructure models for system-level strategies or approaches.
- Researching and reporting on how other regions are effectively strengthening capacity building resources for their nonprofits and assess New Mexico's unique characteristics, differences and needs and opportunities.
- Identify specific study questions, that may include the following (referring to New Mexico):
 - What types of capacity building services are available and by whom?
 - How is capacity building being funded and by whom?
 - How are capacity building services being delivered?
 - How are these services distributed across the state?
 - How are these services being coordinated?
 - What factors influence how nonprofits use capacity building services?
 - What factors influence how nonprofits access capacity building services?
 - What are the barriers for capacity building providers for providing higher quality services?
 - What are the core activities that could enhance capacity building?
 - What are promising models or organizational structures to achieve greater nonprofit capacity in both rural and metro areas?
- Designing of appropriate data collection tools and methodology (literature review, surveys, Interviews, focus groups, etc.).
- Gathering and aggregating existing data and information on New Mexico nonprofits, capacity building providers and funders
- Segmenting the data and analyzing the information across and between different organizational characteristics (for example, highlighting how capacity building provider organizations differ by budget size, development stage, sector, target population, or location served).

DELIVERABLES

- A report that:
 - Identifies existing capacity-building assets, challenges, and opportunities
 - Identifies priorities and provides robust recommendations for funders, nonprofits, and capacity-building providers to address gaps in programs and build a more coordinated system, with a focus on where new and existing funds could have the greatest impact
- Presentations to steering committee and key stakeholders to share findings and recommendations

QUALIFICATIONS

- Demonstrated understanding of, and appreciation for nonprofit capacity building research
- Visibility on the national landscape of capacity building efforts and on the debates and discussions around capacity building challenges and opportunities
- Experience in conducting evaluations engaging multiple stakeholders
- Experience with both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods

- Experience in survey and focus group design and implementation
- Incorporates progressive and current evaluation instruments into their approach, leveraging technology where possible
- Ability to communicate evaluation results, free of complicated jargon, to key stakeholders
- Approaches evaluation with integrity, flexibility, and a commitment to learning
- Demonstrates strong project management skills and has capacity and resources dedicated to project management

SUBMISSION MATERIALS

- Proposal should include the following:
 - Brief introduction and summary of your capacity to successfully execute the project
 - Project work plan and timeline
 - Deliverables
 - Quote of estimated costs and associated narrative
 - Writing Sample
 - Client list and references

BUDGET

Please propose a substantiated project budget and narrative designed to meet the project goals and scope of service. The budget should not include any costs applicants may incur in developing their proposals. Total budget available for this project is \$25,000. Proposals exceeding this amount will not be considered. Should your prospective budget come below the total budget available, additional funding may be reserved for future phases of work (ex. additional analysis, implementation planning, etc.).

TIMELINE AND SELECTION PROCESS

February 27, 2018: RFP released
 March 30, 2018: Submission materials due
 April 9 - 13, 2018: Finalist interviews; can be conducted by teleconference
 April 13, 2018: Project consultant selected and notified
 April – September: Work with steering committee and NMAG staff
 October 31, 2018: Final report submission no later than

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The selected individual or organization will be required to enter into a contract with the New Mexico Association of Grantmakers. This RFP will be a part of that final contract.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Qualified applicants should submit the materials described above via e-mail to cathyfrey@nmag.org or for questions contact:

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***Core Capacity Building Funder Group:**

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- Terra Winter, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico