

Supporting Organizing Work in Connecticut

Insights from Organizers

By Mónica Córdova and Marjorie Childress

Report prepared for SOW-CT Collaborative
October 2019

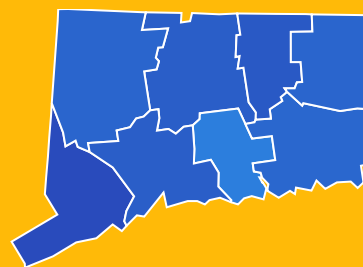


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Introduction

Supporting Organizing Work in Connecticut (SOW-CT) is a collaborative effort formed in 2015 by a group of Connecticut philanthropic organizations[1] to pool resources to strengthen the capacity and infrastructure for community organizing in Connecticut.

The SOW-CT collaborative seeks to deepen relationships with organizing groups and leaders and find opportunities to strengthen the field. Goals and priorities developed in 2017 uplifted the importance of building relationships with each other and with organizers in the field. A priority is for the work to be grounded in needs identified by organizers in the field.

To further its goals, the group held a convening in August 2019, bringing together organizers and some members of SOW-CT in Middletown, CT. The convening was envisioned by SOW-CT as a first step in an ongoing process of engagement to “work with and alongside organizers,” in a way that does not “assume to know or prescribe what they see as necessary or lacking to support their success.”[2]

The objective of the convening was two-fold: to provide an opportunity to build relationships between funders and organizers, and to learn from organizers the supports that would be most beneficial for building the field and supporting their organizing work. Prior to the convening, information was gathered from a pre-survey and telephone interviews with a subset of organizations. This report provides SOW-CT with data and information gathered from the convening, as well as the survey and interviews. There are four key findings culled from the information gathered:

1. Current funding practices and systems can create barriers to accessing resources.
2. The Connecticut organizing ecosystem would be strengthened by deeper relationships and alignment between philanthropic institutions and organizing groups.
3. Organizing groups and the field would benefit from more relationship and collective strategy building opportunities.
4. The sustainability of organizing groups would be deepened by opportunities and investments that support deepened analysis, organizing and management skills, leadership development and wellness of organizers and community members.

Not reflected in the key findings, but important to highlight, is that throughout the process organizers uplifted strong commitment to the work as a key attribute of their organizations. The word “commitment” was stated or written across the survey, interviews and convening, repeatedly, to describe the strengths of organizing groups in Connecticut. Several organizers noted that in Connecticut there are committed community members and organizers working outside the nonprofit, 501c3 sector at the very grassroots level, moving powerful and meaningful work to advance social change in their communities. It was clear that the group of organizers convened for this process situate themselves within a broader field and have keen desire to build a movement for change that cuts across issues, geography, and non-profit status.

[1] SOW-CT members include the Perrin Family Foundation, William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, CT Community Foundation, Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, Tow Foundation, Universal Health Care Foundation, New England Grassroots Environment Fund, and CT Council on Philanthropy.

[2] About SOW-CT document see Appendix.

Methodology

It is critical to note that this report is not a comprehensive scan of the organizing field in Connecticut. The findings should be considered a first round of information in the longer process SOW-CT envisions in collaboration with Connecticut organizers.

SOW-CT enlisted the help of consultants Mónica Córdova and Marjorie Childress to facilitate a successful convening. The information presented in this report was gathered in a variety of ways, with the goal of providing organizers multiple ways to offer their perspectives related to infrastructure and capacity needs of both their own organizations as well as the field.

An initial online survey[3] and opportunity for a one-hour telephone interview were provided to organizers invited to the convening. The survey and interviews sought to surface organizer's perspectives on the most important needs for strengthening both the field of organizing and individual organizations. Organizers were asked to assess their relationships with philanthropic organizations and the degree to which they are connected to other organizing groups, to describe the main barriers they face in their work, and to also describe their strengths. The information gathered through the survey and individual interviews provided important contextual information about the organizing field in Connecticut and helped shape the convening.

The all-day convening was held in Middletown, CT at Wesleyan University. The day was crafted to meet the following goals:

1. Create opportunities to strengthen relationships among the community organizers and funders in Connecticut.
2. Establish trust and transparency with community organizers and the SOW-CT Collaborative.
3. Provide feedback to the SOW-CT Collaborative to help shape priorities, future offerings and broader efforts to strengthen the organizing field.

The agenda shifted during the convening to provide space for more transparent conversation among the organizers and funders in the room. The final activities included the following exercises and discussions:

- Description of SOW-CT by funders, with time for questions and answers
- "Who am I" poem exercise that helps participants build relationships and bring their full selves into a space
- Fishbowl discussion between funders and organizers to provide an opportunity for honest and open conversation
- Small group discussions about needs and solutions for supporting the organizing field

When planning for the convening, SOW-CT members populated a list of groups they believed were engaged in community organizing. While SOW-CT has not formally agreed on a singular definition of "community organizing," they prioritized engaging organizations whose work centers on "engaging communities that are most directly impacted as leaders of social justice efforts and building collective power." Funders were explicitly asked to think about organizations that fall outside of their grantee network and/or groups or efforts that may fall outside of the traditional 501c3 structure. A total of 26 organizations were invited to engage in this process.

A list of invited organizations can be found in the Appendix.

[3] See appendix for summary survey findings. Pages with open-ended responses are blank, with answers withheld to protect anonymity.

It is important to be explicit about the limitations of the information gathered here. In all, 21 community organizations participated in the process[4]. Five organizers participated in all three components: survey, interviews and convening. At the convening, 26 organizers represented 16 organizations, and representatives of six foundations participated. The survey was taken by 13 organizers, eight of whom participated in an interview. Survey respondents and those who opted to be interviewed were promised anonymity so that they could respond freely.

Information collected from the survey, interviews and convening informs this report. Key findings were identified by analyzing information that surfaced multiples times or across the three information gathering activities.

Not all of those who were invited to participate were able to do so, and their perspectives are not represented. It's also important to note that there are many more organizations in Connecticut that self-identity as organizing groups that were not engaged in this process. Additionally, it was specifically noted by several organizers during the convening that organizing also happens outside of the 501c3 nonprofit field. When considering what interventions could strengthen the field of organizing SOW-CT should consider soliciting additional layers of input from the broader field, both inside and outside the nonprofit organizational field.

The report is focused primarily on gaps, barriers and potential solutions for SOW-CT to consider when seeking opportunities to support the field of organizing. In the survey, interviews, and convening, organizers communicated a range of perspectives, ideas and even demands. The recommendations offered in this report are an initial list of ideas for the SOW-CT Collaborative to take under consideration. Several themes connected to strengths in the field and partnerships between funders and organizations also arose but received less attention. A deeper understanding of strengths may add value to the recommended solutions.

[4]A Better Way Foundation, Bridgeport Generation Now, Building One Community, Christian Activities Council, Congregations Organized For A New Connecticut, Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance, CT Bail Fund, CT Black and Brown Union, CT Citizen Research Group, CT Citizen's Action Group, CT Students for a Dream, CTCORE-Organize Now!, Faith Acts for Education, Hearing Youth Voices, Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care, Katal Center, Make the Road Connecticut, People Against Police Brutality/Justice for Jayson, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Sustainable CT, Unidad Latina en Accion

Key Findings

KEY FINDING #1:

Current funding practices and systems can create barriers to accessing resources.

“Not just a matter of proposal submitted, mid-year report, final report, something more substantial. Funding should be more responsive. Sometimes things come up, we plan and things come up that aren't part of itinerary, that are important and need capacity or time that isn't funded.”

-from an organizer interview

Approaches funders use to move resources underlined many of the conversations. There is a recognition in the field and among SOW-CT partners of the inherent power dynamics that play out in funding strategies. The SOW-CT Collaborative creates a unique space for funders to further acknowledge and tackle this challenge.

Groups uplifted that the structures and systems set by foundations to access funding can be exclusionary to people of color and low-income communities, which tilts the ability to acquire funding and set community agendas in favor of groups led by white organizers, or other outsiders to communities of color. The proposal, evaluation and reporting requirements do not always line up with how organizations describe their work and how they measure impact.

Organizers also expressed concern that funders through the collaborative would create a definition of community organizing, which would in turn lead to the elevation of some organizations, leaders and issues over others.

These insights echo research in the field that cautions funders working collaboratively to be cognizant of the power they wield to pick “winners and losers.” As they support strong organizations for the greatest impact they should recognize that some nonprofits may not be granted resources for reasons other than their ability to achieve their goals[5].

Organizers noted at the convening and in interviews that there are different approaches to organizing and that it's challenging when funders rather than community members and leaders define what organizing is and is not. Groups questioned how or if SOW-CT would define organizing.



Organizers proposed the following to SOW-CT:

- Create proposal and reporting processes that are accessible to the communities they serve. Phone or video interviews instead of written reports or evaluations are examples.
- Create evaluation and reporting processes that reflect the way organizations define impact and measure success.
- Partner with community groups to develop funding priorities and strategies that are reflective of organizing conditions and centered on equity and justice.

[5] Powell, Alison, Ditkoff, Susan Wolf, and Twersky, Fay. “How Philanthropic Collaborations Succeed, and Why They Fail.” Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2019. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_philanthropic_collaborations_succeed_and_why_they_fail

- The SOW-CT Collaborative can work to educate and organize other funders to understand and resource organizing as a necessary strategy to improve conditions in Connecticut.
- Organizations do a lot with small budgets, and organizers are often stretched thin. General operating funds rather than project grants would help by allowing allocation of resources where they are most needed to support the overall health of organizations.
- The SOW-CT Collaborative should grapple with the complexities of their own power, and how they relate as institutions to the Connecticut social justice movement

KEY FINDING #2:

The Connecticut organizing ecosystem would be strengthened by deeper relationships and alignment between philanthropic institutions and organizing groups.

“Really just listen, and try to understand what work is being done, how and why it’s being done and look at funding from that standpoint.”
-from organizer interview

The relationship between organizing groups and funding institutions was noted as an important area that could be improved in the Connecticut organizing landscape. This was a consistent message during the convening as well as interviews and surveys.

When choosing the top three from a list of options that would benefit their organizations, the most common survey response was improved relationships with funders[6]. And when asked the same question regarding what would most benefit the field of organizing, relationships with foundations were also prioritized. In a ranking question related to how organizers view funder understanding, partnership, and support of their work most responses ranked local philanthropy in the middle or below.

These responses align with the goal of SOW-CT to work “with and alongside organizers,” and the collaborative provides a promising vehicle for achieving that end. Research has shown that funders participating in collaborative groups report they learned more and formed important relationships in their sectors[7].

At the convening, organizers expressed disappointment at the absence of some funders, underscoring that funder presence is an important demonstration of their commitment to the work and to building authentic relationships.

While the hope to strengthen relationships with funders was a recurring topic, it was noted there are local philanthropic institutions that have practiced good partnerships with the organizing field. The themes that emerged within this finding were centered on the need for better alignment among funders and organizers who are leading the work.

Specifically, organizers express there needs to be more persistent and open, two-way communication with funders rather than just the occasional conversation, proposal, or report. Regular and ongoing conversation can lead to stronger relationships and provide an opportunity for organizers to discuss the strengths and challenges of their work in real time. It can also lead to funders having a deeper understanding of the conditions on the ground, which in turn could create opportunities for funders to respond more effectively to the needs of organizing efforts in Connecticut and create the potential for better alignment.

[6] See survey summary results in appendix.

[7] Powell, Alison, Ditkoff, Susan Wolf, and Twersky, Fay. “How Philanthropic Collaborations Succeed, and Why They Fail.” Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2019. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_philanthropic_collaborations_succeed_and_why_they_fail

Organizers also uplifted the need to build a relationship with or be connected to new funders. There are a lack of clear pathways or opportunities for organizations to connect with potential new funders. Due to this, several organizations were interested in attending the August convening with hopes of making new funder connections and strengthening existing relationships.

The SOW-CT Collaborative has the potential to create a space and a set of practices for funding institutions to resource the field of organizing in a responsive and more aligned way. Organizers expressed the need for general operating support beyond specific issue organizing, so that they could pay for important functions that support building membership or their community base of support. There are often unforeseen circumstances both in organizing moments and in sustaining the health of an organization. These are situations that get overlooked or go under resourced because they are not in line with the systems and structures that philanthropic institutions use to move grants to organizations. The approach of some foundations to fund specific projects weakens the ability to effectively respond to immediate needs, crisis situations, or unplanned opportunities to build power.



Organizers proposed the following to SOW-CT:

- Create a rapid response fund for movement needs. A discussion at the convening uplifted that organizations at times must shift their work to respond to immediate movement needs. Those shifts often do not have funding because there is no way of predicting they will happen. A suggestion was the creation of a bail fund and an emergency response fund for groups to access resources in those moments.
- Develop a fund for organizations to draw on for projects not normally supported by foundations, for instance investment or matching funds to kick off a drive to create an endowment or acquire a building.
- Build spaces for building trust and having conversations outside of the grant application and reporting process.
- Be more intentional in partnering with community groups and leaders as thought partners, compensating them for the time they provide to educate foundations.

KEY FINDING #3:

Organizing groups and the field would benefit from more relationship and collective strategy building opportunities.

“What is the short-term strategy that’s aligned with long term strategy, that’s the conversation I want to have. The capacity is never quite there to get us all in the room.”--From an organizer interview.

Strong relationships among leaders and organizations are fundamental to effective organizing, creating greater likelihood of collaboration and effective scaling up of social change efforts. The field in Connecticut would benefit from investments to strengthen the connective tissue of the organizing landscape. Organizers need more opportunities to build relationships and to strategize together.

[5] Powell, Alison, Ditkoff, Susan Wolf, and Twersky, Fay. “How Philanthropic Collaborations Succeed, and Why They Fail.” Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2019. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_philanthropic_collaborations_succeed_and_why_they_fail

The thirteen survey respondents chose from a list of possible investments or opportunities that would most benefit the field of organizing, and their own organizations[8]. The answers receiving the most responses were opportunities to build relationships with funders and other organizers, to deepen intersectional analysis, to strategize together across issue areas, and a need for coaching and mentoring for organizers. These priorities were echoed by the broader group of organizers at the convening.

In interviews, while some groups are part of coalitions or networks that provide meaningful collaboration, we heard from multiple organizers that the field in Connecticut can feel siloed, making it difficult for groups to organize together across issues and geography. Similar challenges experienced by funders led, in part, to the creation of SOW-CT.

One reason offered was that governance models in Connecticut lead some groups to focus change efforts on a particular town rather than building statewide or regional strategies. A lack of resources or opportunities to strategize together and the already stretched capacity of groups also undermines the ability of organizations to prioritize collaborative efforts and deeper relationship building.

This issue was repeatedly discussed in the survey, in interviews and during the convening, pointing toward a concrete and important need, and an opportunity for investment.



Organizers proposed the following to SOW-CT:

- Support organizers' ability to build trust and stronger relationships by providing resources to attend field led meetings, conferences, convenings, and retreats.
- Resource space for collective strategizing and building outside issue areas. One organizer suggested that foundations could support strategic organizing cohorts that bring groups together to tackle common challenges, to build analysis and skills, or to tackle an issue at the statewide level.
- Generate collaborative funding opportunities that are inclusive, open and not just focused on individual groups or issues. An opportunity mentioned was possible joint civic engagement and Census work.
- Create a fund that organizations could access to resource their own relationship building or strategizing efforts. Examples of how the fund could be used are transportation, lodging, rental and meeting expenses.

KEY FINDING #4:

The sustainability of organizing groups would be deepened by opportunities and investments that support deepened analysis, organizing and management skills, leadership development and wellness of organizers and community members.

When asked what their greatest barriers were, seven of the 13 respondents to the survey said lack of capacity, reflected in statements like “lack of resources”, “limited time and energy”, “feeling stretched thin & burn-out”, and “lack of investment.”

The theme of sustainability echoed through the interviews, and was a resounding theme expressed during the convening. The thread of this centered on the need to develop and support organizers in a holistic way that centers wellness, political development and mentorship.

[8] See summary survey results in appendix.

Organizing can be emotionally and physically exhausting and often community-based organizations do not have the budget or capacity to fully support the individual health of organizers. Finding ways to support healing and invest in the wellness of organizers can be a way to strengthen organizing infrastructure.

Additionally, leadership development was an important area of discussion. Training and skills development of both organizers and community members were high on the list of gaps organizers identified, in a range of areas: political analysis, organizational management, and professional development. One organizer interviewed noted that organizers often come directly from the field with no experience managing people but are called on to manage staff and volunteers. Another angle is that directors of organizations are sometimes hired from service or development organizations, bringing with them organizational management styles that may not work well in the community organizing field. Providing organizers of color with opportunities to be mentored or coached by other people of color was expressed explicitly as a need, to alleviate what one person interviewed called “imposter syndrome,” a persistent and deep-seated doubting of accomplishments or abilities.

Finally, some organizations have a deeply developed racial and gender justice analysis with an intersectional lens. However, multiple organizers noted there’s an analysis gap within the field that allows white-led organizations to have unequal power to direct policy or other agendas when it comes to coalition or network campaigns. Additionally, white-led organizations have been able to access more resources allowing for more capacity to lead in this way. There’s a need for a centering of racial justice and deeper intersectional analysis across the organizing field and in funding strategies that support the work.



Organizers proposed the following to SOW-CT:

- Support for trainings, convenings and workshops that further the development of political and intersectional analysis, particularly concerning racial justice.
- Professional development, mentoring and coaching opportunities would be beneficial for organizers. Several mentioned the need for greater management, organizing and communications skills. Mentors of color would be particularly beneficial for organizers working in predominantly white-led organizations.
- Organizational development training and programs would further the ability of organizers to focus on the field. Some groups advocate funding for organizations that offer fiscal sponsorship, like A Better Way Foundation, which helps small or emerging community organizing groups to acquire resources without having to navigate the complexities of gaining a 501c3 designation.
- Support the health and wellness of individual organizers. This could happen in several ways, one being ensuring that healing and wellness are taken into consideration when developing grantee meetings and gathering. An emergency or self-care fund, or employee assistance programs, would also be avenues for helping to sustain organizers.

Looking Forward

This report describes key themes and information provided by a group of community organizers to SOW-CT, through a convening, survey and interviews. SOW-CT funders noted that the activities undertaken to gather information for this report were just the beginning of what they envision as an ongoing conversation with organizers about how to strengthen their work.

From a relatively small group of 21 organizers, offered rich information to help funders shape the development of SOW-CT, assess current funding practice on a joint and individual level and lean into resourcing opportunities initiated from the field. From that information, four key themes emerged that could inform the focus of SOW-CT work moving forward:

1. Current funding practices and systems can create barriers to accessing resources.
2. The Connecticut organizing ecosystem would be strengthened by deeper relationships and alignment between philanthropic institutions and organizing groups.
3. Organizing groups and the field would benefit from more relationship and collective strategy building opportunities.
4. The sustainability of organizing groups would be deepened by opportunities and investments that support deepened analysis, organizing and management skills, leadership development and wellness of organizers and community members.

Organizers at the convening also brought to the fore the important role that organizers working outside of 501c3 nonprofit organizations play in the broader social change landscape, urging that the field of organizing be conceptualized more broadly than the confines of particular institutions. Soliciting input from organizers outside the nonprofit organizational context could provide valuable insight into needs of the field.

Additionally, themes related to strengths in the field and within partnerships between funders and organizations arose throughout but are focused on less in this report. A deeper understanding of strengths may add value to the recommended solutions.

Both thematically and threading through all of the conversations was a desire that more collaborative and regular partnership occur between funders and organizers and a request that funders become more responsive to the shifts that organizations must often make in the field. While many funding collaboratives are issue or goal based, the SOW-CT collaborative provides a unique opportunity to build the field as a whole through its desire to advance community organizing as a critical strategy for social transformation. Its objectives to support organizations through this lens can allow for funding that is more flexible and aligned with field needs.

As the collaborative continues to build clarity leaning into questions like, “If we are a funder-driven collaborative, are we effectively and authentically engaging diverse communities where we are seeking impact, in all aspects of our work (framing the top issues, setting priorities, assessing failure and success, adjusting course as needed)? What ongoing processes and methods might help us better engage grantees and incorporate more diverse perspectives into our work?” noted in *How Philanthropic Collaborations Succeed, and Why They Fail*, will keep the collaborative grounded. Critical to this process is creating the conditions that allow members to grapple with challenging issues and take risks. At the same time, a literature review of research about funder collaboratives cautions that care must be taken that funders building alignment around strategies not stifle “emergent ideas and practices” in the field[1].

[9]Powell, Alison, Ditkoff, Susan Wolf, and Hassey, Kate. “Value of Collaboration Research Study: Literature Review on Funder Collaboration.” The Bridgespan Group, 2018.

The following organizations were invited to the organizing convening.

Black Lives Matter NHV
Bridgeport Generation Now
Building One Community
Christian Activities Council
CONECT
CT Bail Fund
CT Black and Brown Student Union
CT Citizens Action Group
CT Immigrant Rights Alliance
CT Students for a Dream
CT-CORE
DUE Justice; Concerned Black Clergy of Waterbury
Faith Acts
Grow Hartford
Hearing Youth Voices
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice
Make the Road CT
Minority Inclusion Project
People Against Police Brutality
Planned Parenthood
Protect Our Care/Interfaith Fellowship
QUEST
Sustainable CT
The Ungroup Society
Unidad Latina en Accion
Unlock the Vote

The following two pages contain a document that was included in the convening invitation, describing SOW-CT with details about the convening.

Supporting Organizing Work CT (SOW-CT)

About Supporting Organizing Work in Connecticut (SOW-CT)

Over the past several years, there has been growing interest among CT's philanthropic community in supporting organizing as a strategy to advance community change and promote equity and justice, both in specific localities and around issue areas including education, health care, criminal justice and immigration.

SOW-CT's work grows out of the recognition that strong, effective organizing work – in any region and on any issue area—requires capacity and infrastructure for the organizing field that cuts across the boundaries of specific constituencies, geographic regions and issue silos. While individual foundations may have limitations and barriers that prevent them from addressing these intersectional, statewide needs, there is the potential to address them collectively and collaboratively.

Historical Context

In October of 2015, the Perrin Family Foundation convened several foundations to begin a conversation about how we, as funders, can learn with and from each other – and practitioners – in order to better understand and respond to the needs, challenges and opportunities facing the organizing field in CT. Participants in this initial meeting expressed a shared desire for continued dialogue with others that are currently funding or interested in funding organizing. At its inception the group aimed to:

- Cultivate a shared understanding of social change and the unique role of youth, parent and community organizing.
- Deepen foundations' collective knowledge in regards to needs and challenges facing the organizing field in CT and the ways in which our respective foundations are tackling the existing infrastructure gaps.
- Identify areas and opportunities of alignment, partnership, collaboration in service of strengthening the organizing field across CT.
- Create a space for funders to reflect on how the dynamics of race, class, power and privilege interface with foundations' desire and efforts to nurture social change.

In March of 2017, the group engaged in collective visioning and goal setting exercise, which generated the following goals and priorities:

- Building stronger relationships with each other as philanthropic peers *and* with organizers in the field.
- Learning with and from each other *and* organizers.
- Identifying and implementing funding strategies and approaches that break down silos; consciously mitigate the power dynamics between funders and organizers; explicitly consider the dynamics of institutional racism in grantmaking; build long term support for organizing; and intentionally leverage each other's investments for greater impact.

Ultimately, members of this group **would like to see our work together result in:**

- a robust and better resourced organizing ecosystem;
- intentional talent pipelines to support the development of effective organizers;
- more organizing groups that are led by people of color and/or doing work with a racial justice lens;
- stronger, sustainable organizing infrastructure to undergird the work of organizing groups.

Current Membership

The work of SOW-CT has been anchored by the Perrin Family Foundation in partnership with and the participation of staff from the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the CT Community Foundation, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, the Tow Foundation, the Universal Health Care Foundation, the Working Cities Challenge, the New England Grassroots Environment Fund, and the CT Council on Philanthropy.

Organizer Convening

SOW-CT members have consistently underscored the importance of building out this work *with and alongside* organizers, not for them or in a way that assumes to know or prescribe what they see as necessary or lacking to support their success. In order to move that work forward, SOW is planning to hold an **Organizer Convening** in the summer of 2019. The intended goals of the Organizer Convening are to:

1. Ensure that the work of the SOW-CT is grounded in and responsive to the needs and interests of the organizing field.
2. Gather concrete feedback to help inform SOW-CT's short and long-term priorities, including efforts to strengthen infrastructure for the organizing field.
3. Begin to act on SOW-CT's expressed commitment to engage in philanthropic practice of working *with* (rather than in isolation from) those that are engaged in on-the-ground work.

Convening Consultants

We have engaged Monica Cordova and Marjorie Childress to help plan and facilitate the Organizer Convening.

Mónica Córdova is a native New Mexican who developed her leadership from a very early age through youth organizing programs that utilized social justice and empowerment approaches. In 2005, she became the youth organizer at the [SouthWest Organizing Project \(SWOP\)](#), a local community-based grassroots organization in Albuquerque, NM. There she developed innovative youth rights campaigns that focused on building the leadership of SWOP's youth members and in 2008 went on to become a Co-Director at SWOP. Mónica brought her many years of experience in youth and multigenerational organizing, building networks, community and civic engagement organizing to the national level at [Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing \(FCYO\)](#) team as a Program Director in 2014 to lead [Healthy Communities: Youth for Healthy Schools](#) and became Deputy Director in 2017. Mónica values the critical role FCYO plays to resources and uplift the work led by youth of color that sits at the intersection of racial and educational justice, healthy equity and building power. She also stays connected to local efforts in New Mexico as the President of the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center Board of Directors.

Marjorie Childress became politically active during the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s when she lived in Seattle and became immersed in labor solidarity organizing. She has worked in New Mexico's nonprofit, social justice sector for almost 20 years. Marjorie started as a member of the SouthWest Organizing Project and joined the staff in 2002, an experience that gave her a deep appreciation for the power of grassroots community organizing. By 2010 she was Co-Director of SWOP, working with the staff to advance policy advocacy, civic engagement and strategic communications campaigns, and leading membership development programs. In recent years she's worked as a journalist and editor at a local news nonprofit, and as a consultant, bringing her experience in program design, evaluation and strategic planning processes to other nonprofit organizations. In her spare time Marjorie loves river rafting and taking her dog Ellie on long walks through the Rio Grande bosque.

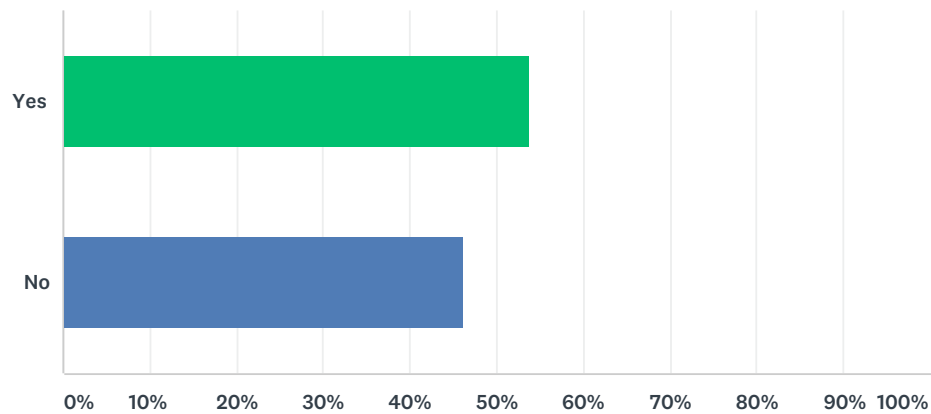
The following pages summarize results from an online survey taken by 13 organizers who were promised anonymity. Blank pages indicate where information gathered from open-ended questions was removed to protect identity. Pages 19-26 are not included because they were either blank pages or pages regarding organizing interviews or convening availability.

Q1 What is the name of your organization?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

Q2 Do you have federal 501c3 status?

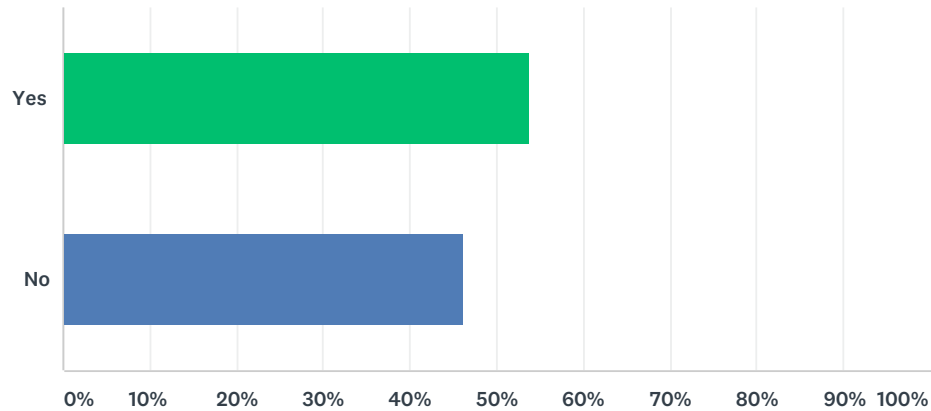
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.85%	7
No	46.15%	6
Total Respondents: 13		

Q3 Do you have another organization serving as a fiscal sponsor?

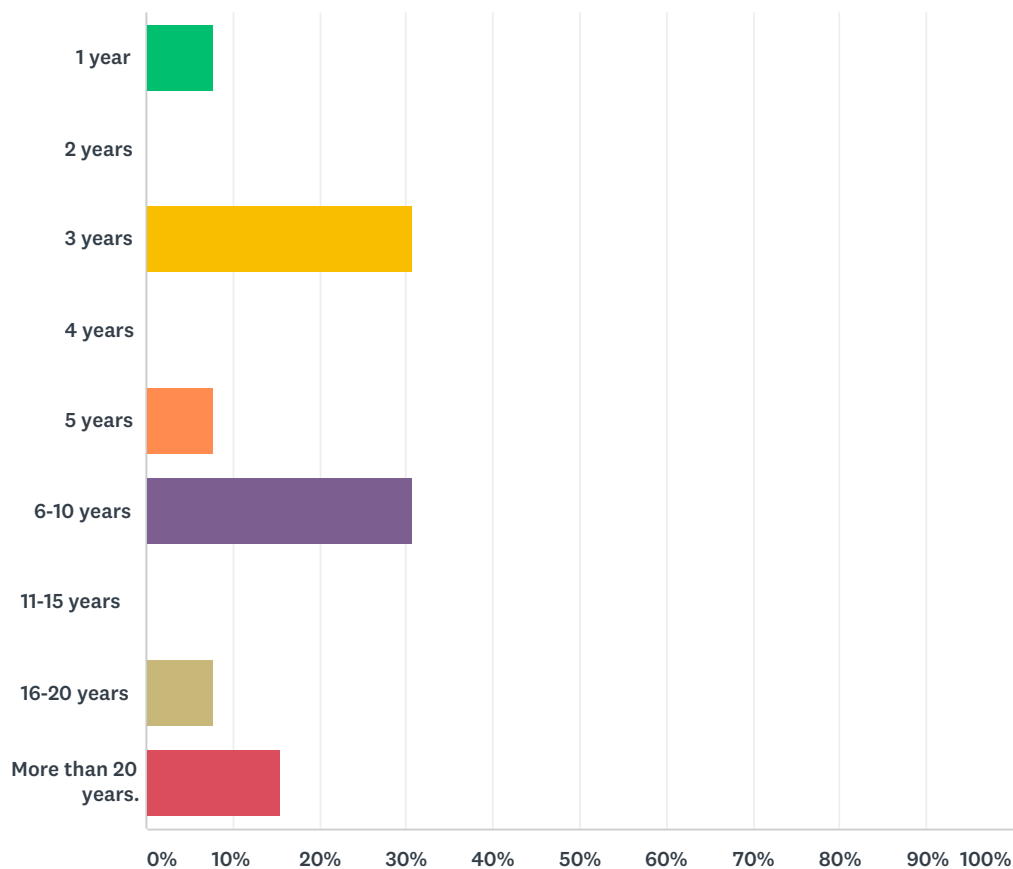
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		53.85%	7
No		46.15%	6
TOTAL			13

Q4 How old is your organization?

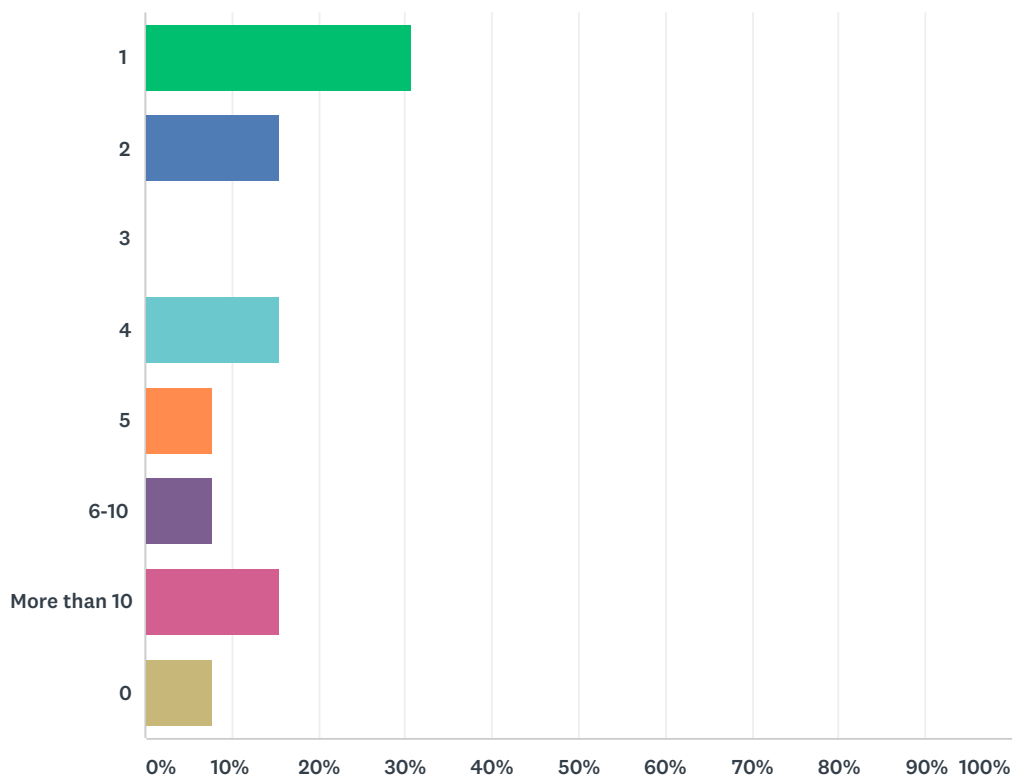
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 year	7.69%	1
2 years	0.00%	0
3 years	30.77%	4
4 years	0.00%	0
5 years	7.69%	1
6-10 years	30.77%	4
11-15 years	0.00%	0
16-20 years	7.69%	1
More than 20 years.	15.38%	2
TOTAL		13

Q5 How many full-time employees currently work for your organization?

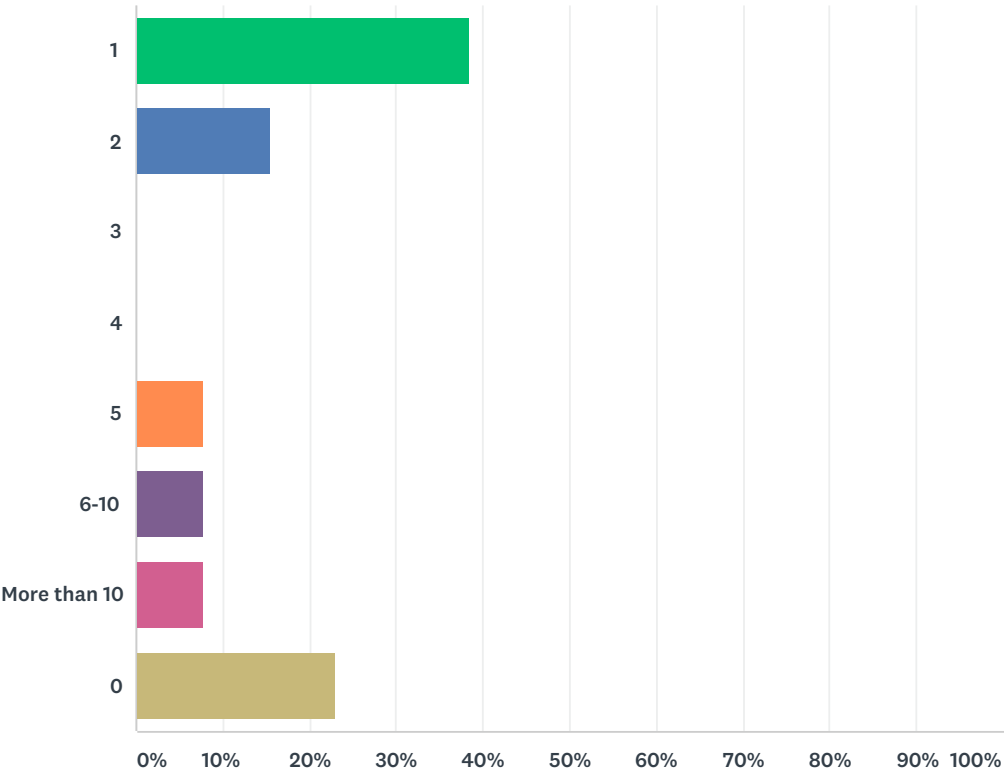
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	30.77%	4
2	15.38%	2
3	0.00%	0
4	15.38%	2
5	7.69%	1
6-10	7.69%	1
More than 10	15.38%	2
0	7.69%	1
TOTAL		13

Q6 How many part-time employees currently work for your organization?

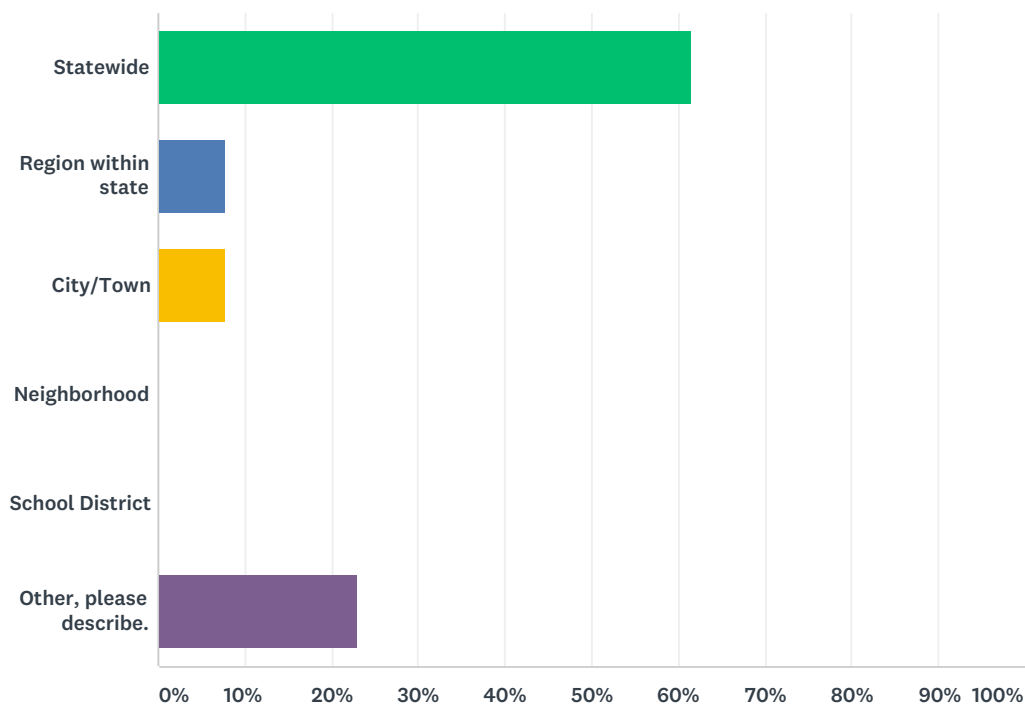
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	38.46%	5
2	15.38%	2
3	0.00%	0
4	0.00%	0
5	7.69%	1
6-10	7.69%	1
More than 10	7.69%	1
0	23.08%	3
TOTAL		13

Q7 What is the geographic scope of your organizing work? (Statewide, Local, Neighborhood, School District, etc.)

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Statewide	61.54%	8
Region within state	7.69%	1
City/Town	7.69%	1
Neighborhood	0.00%	0
School District	0.00%	0
Other, please describe.	23.08%	3
TOTAL		13

Q8 Who are your primary constituents (i.e. youth, people of color, immigrant, LGBTQIA, etc.)?

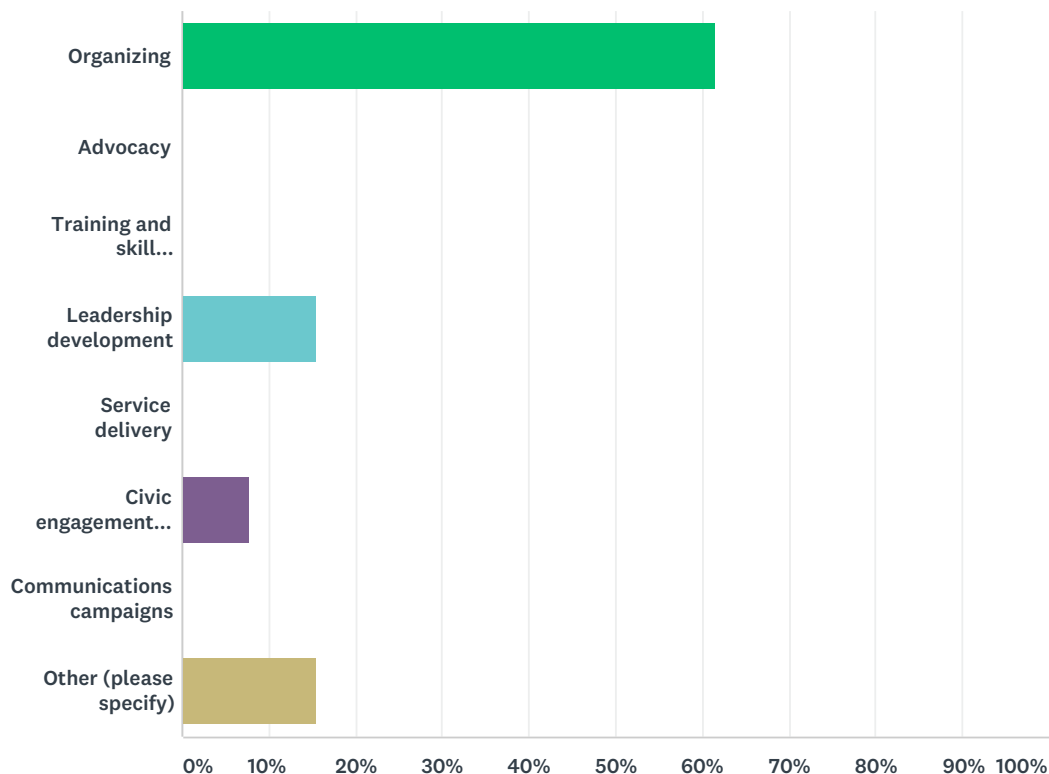
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

Q9 Where do your primary constituencies primarily live? For example, a particular city, neighborhood, etc.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

Q10 What is your primary strategy for achieving your goals? Please choose one.

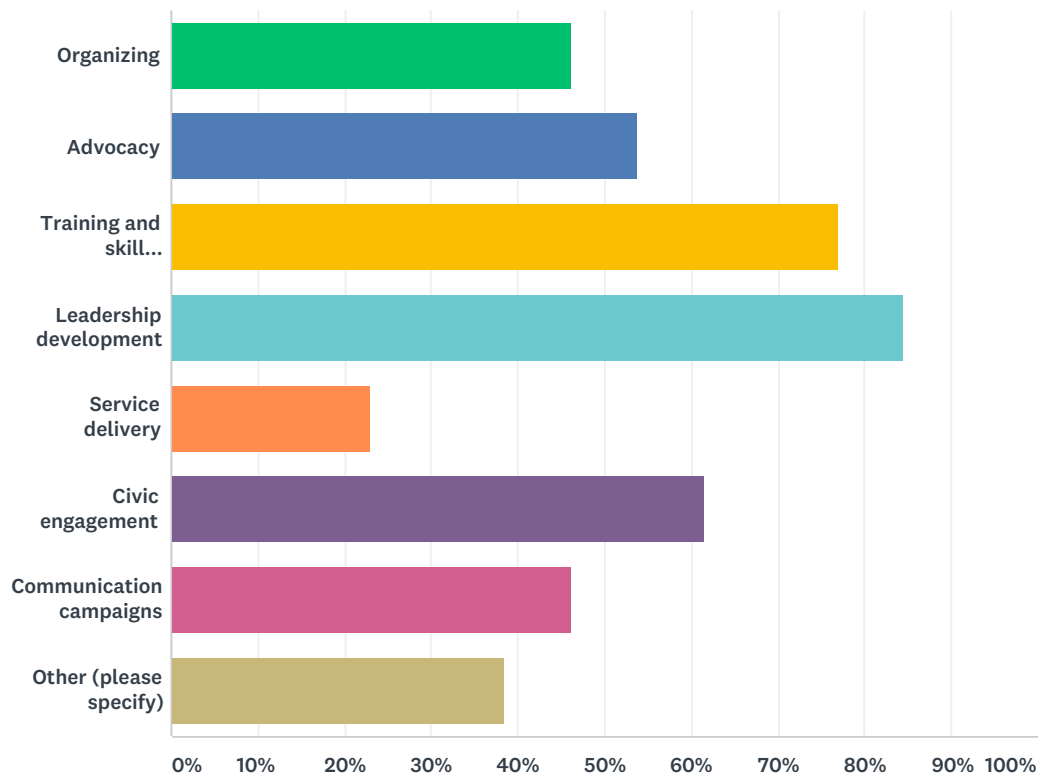
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Organizing	61.54%	8
Advocacy	0.00%	0
Training and skill development	0.00%	0
Leadership development	15.38%	2
Service delivery	0.00%	0
Civic engagement campaigns	7.69%	1
Communications campaigns	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	15.38%	2
Total Respondents: 13		

Q11 What other strategies are important to your work?

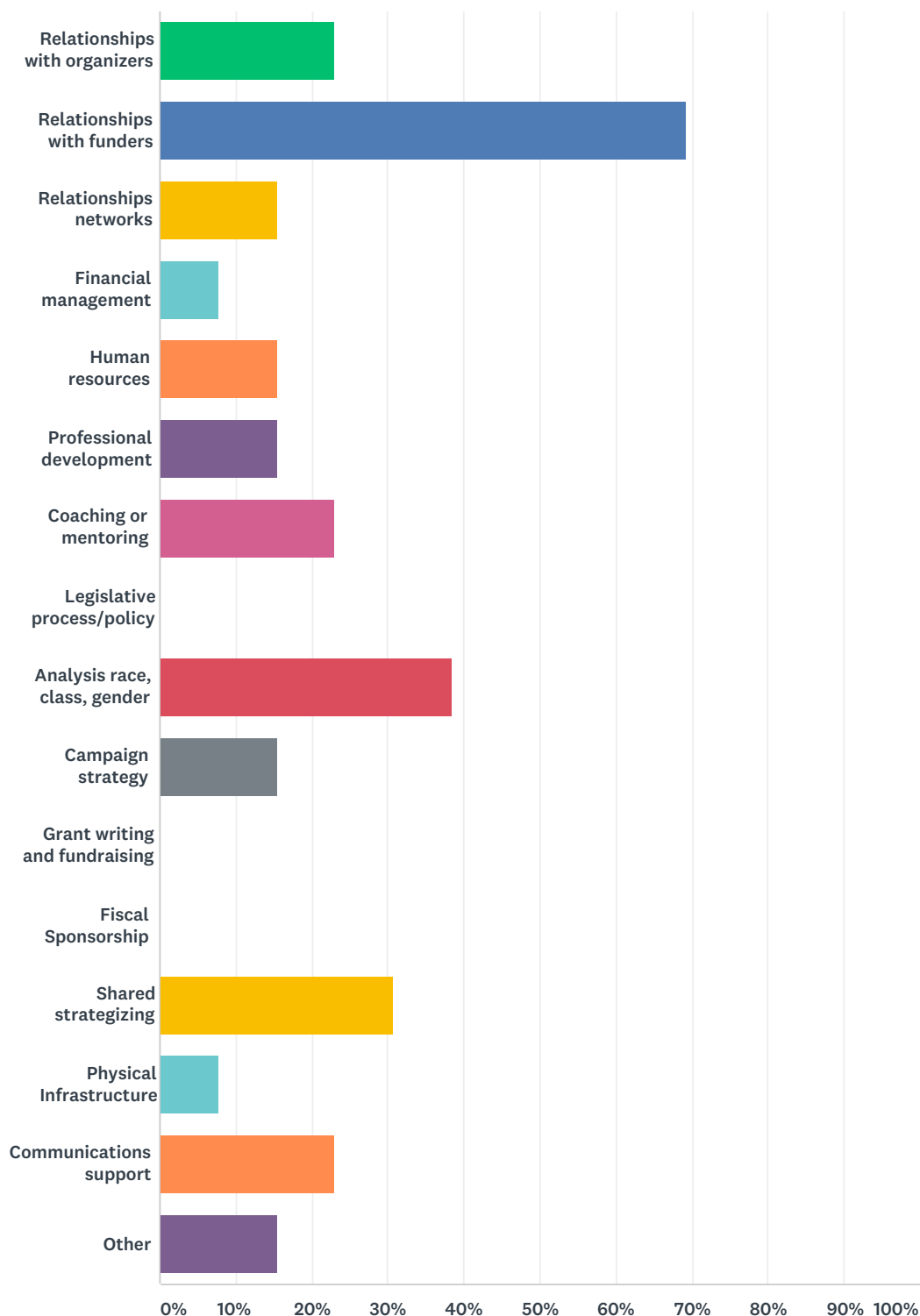
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Organizing	46.15%	6
Advocacy	53.85%	7
Training and skill development	76.92%	10
Leadership development	84.62%	11
Service delivery	23.08%	3
Civic engagement	61.54%	8
Communication campaigns	46.15%	6
Other (please specify)	38.46%	5
Total Respondents: 13		

Q12 From the following options, please choose the top three that would benefit your organization.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



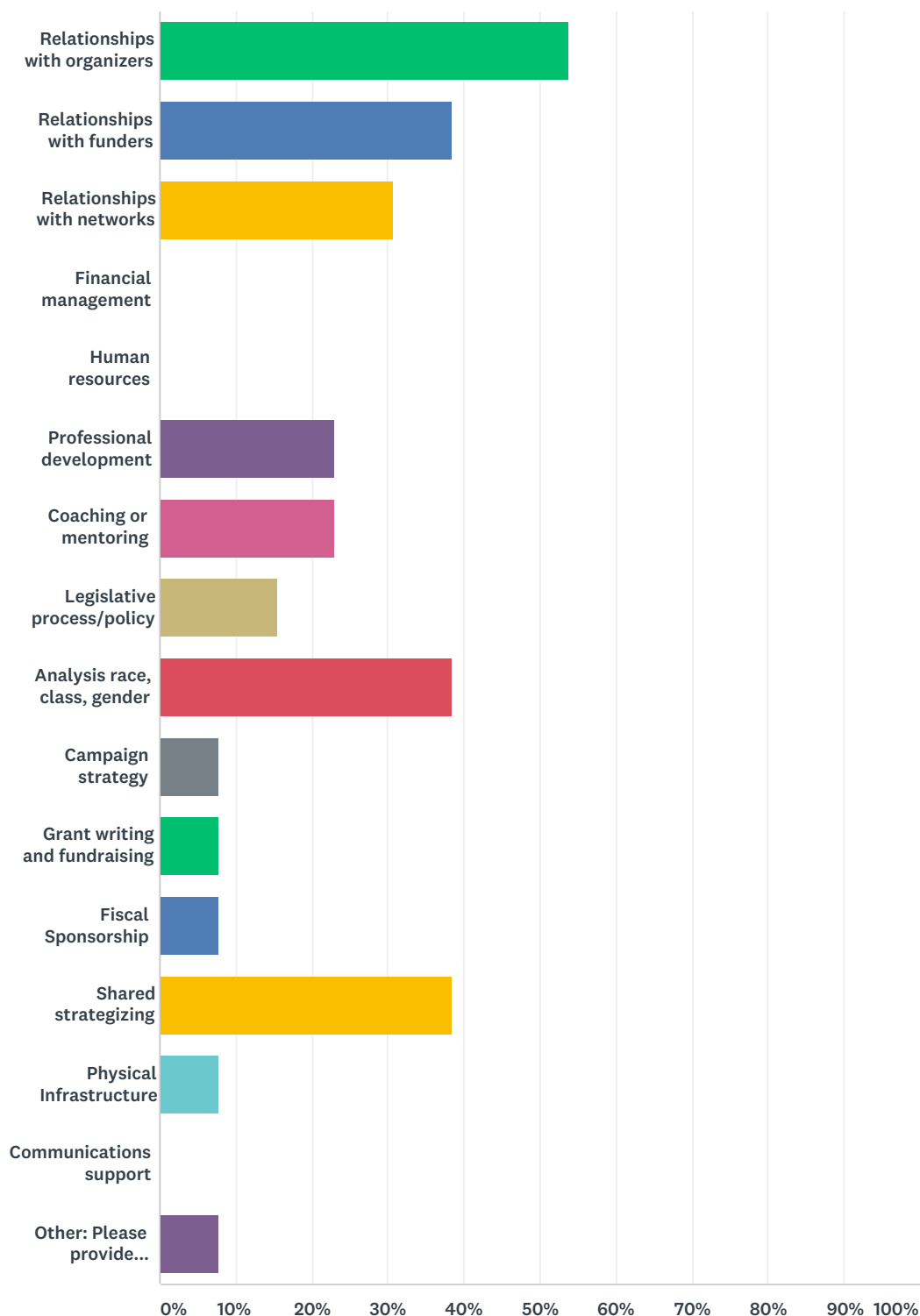
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Relationships with organizers	23.08%	3
Relationships with funders	69.23%	9
Relationships networks	15.38%	2
Financial management	7.69%	1
Human resources	15.38%	2
Professional development	15.38%	2
Coaching or mentoring	23.08%	3
Legislative process/policy	0.00%	0
Analysis race, class, gender	38.46%	5
Campaign strategy	15.38%	2
Grant writing and fundraising	0.00%	0
Fiscal Sponsorship	0.00%	0
Shared strategizing	30.77%	4
Physical Infrastructure	7.69%	1
Communications support	23.08%	3
Other	15.38%	2
Total Respondents: 13		

Q13 From the following options, please choose the top three that would benefit the organizing field in CT.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



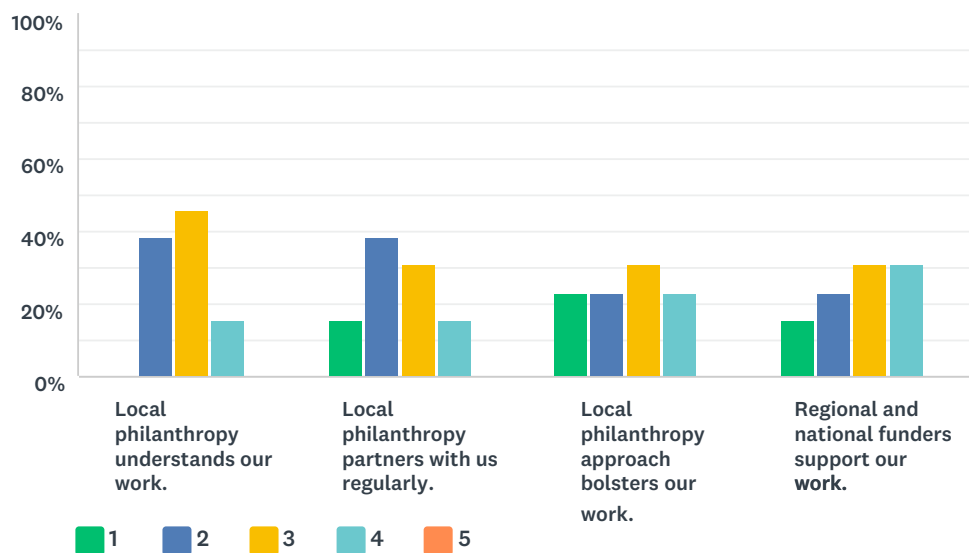
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Relationships with organizers	53.85%	7
Relationships with funders	38.46%	5
Relationships with networks	30.77%	4
Financial management	0.00%	0
Human resources	0.00%	0
Professional development	23.08%	3
Coaching or mentoring	23.08%	3
Legislative process/policy	15.38%	2
Analysis race, class, gender	38.46%	5
Campaign strategy	7.69%	1
Grant writing and fundraising	7.69%	1
Fiscal Sponsorship	7.69%	1
Shared strategizing	38.46%	5
Physical Infrastructure	7.69%	1
Communications support	0.00%	0
Other: Please provide additional comments here.	7.69%	1
Total Respondents: 13		

Q14 On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, please rank your agreement with the following questions.

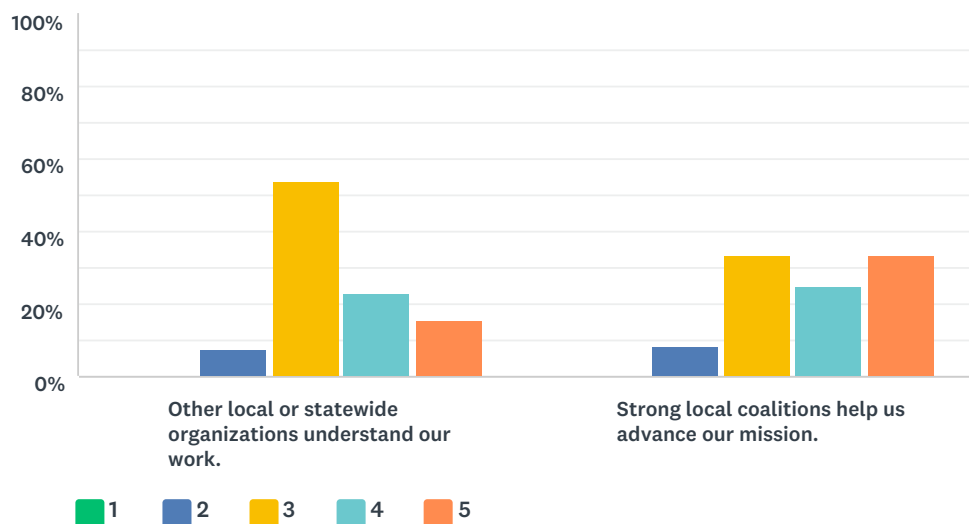
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Local philanthropy understands our work.	0.00% 0	38.46% 5	46.15% 6	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	13	2.77
Local philanthropy partners with us regularly.	15.38% 2	38.46% 5	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	13	2.46
Local philanthropy approach bolsters our work.	23.08% 3	23.08% 3	30.77% 4	23.08% 3	0.00% 0	13	2.54
Regional and national funders support our work.	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	30.77% 4	30.77% 4	0.00% 0	13	2.77

Q15 On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, please rank your agreement with the following questions.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Other local or statewide organizations understand our work.	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	53.85% 7	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	13	3.46
Strong local coalitions help us advance our mission.	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	33.33% 4	25.00% 3	33.33% 4	12	3.83

Q16 Please list the community groups or organizations you work closest with.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	100.00%	13
2	100.00%	13
3	92.31%	12
4	84.62%	11
5	69.23%	9

1/21/2020 Webinar

CT Community Foundation

CT Council for Philanthropy

Emily Hall Tremain Foundation

Nellie Mae Education Foundation

Perrin Family Foundation

Tow Foundation

Universal Healthcare Foundation

William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

1/29/2020 Webinar

Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

CT Community Foundation

CT Council for Philanthropy

Fairfield County's Community Foundation

Nellie Mae Education Foundation

Perrin Family Foundation

Tow Foundation

Universal Healthcare Foundation

William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund