



# Community Needs Assessment

The George Foundation

# The George Foundation

## MISSION

*To partner with the community to leverage the Foundation's resources to positively impact Fort Bend County and its residents.*

## FUNDING ISSUE AREAS:



Education



Human Needs



Health



Community Enhancement

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- Scholarships
- Youth in Philanthropy
- Excellence for Nonprofit Leadership
- George Ranch Historical Park

The story of The George Foundation began in 1824 when Henry and Nancy Jones received a league of land along the Brazos River in the Mexican territory known as Tejas. Through hard work and perseverance, the couple and their 12 children built a successful farming and ranching operation in the new wilderness.

Their great-granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth, affectionately known as “Mamie” to friends and family, was the final member of the lineage to inherit the family’s landholdings. Mamie married Albert P. George, and together, the couple continued the ranching legacy and enhanced the family’s prosperity. In keeping with her family’s reputation of charity and selflessness, Mamie’s compassion for those in need and her desire to give back generated great, yet unsought, admiration within the community.

With a strong desire to give back to the community that blessed their lives, Albert and Mamie George established The George Foundation in 1945 “for the use and benefit of the people of Fort Bend County.” To date, The George Foundation’s Board of Trustees has had the privilege to award more than \$200 million in grants to Fort Bend County nonprofit organizations and scholarship recipients and will continue Albert and Mamie’s legacy of giving into the future.

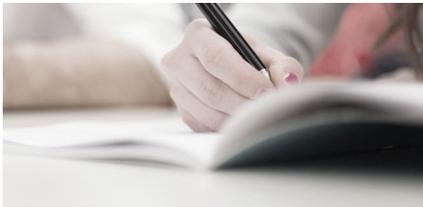
## VISION

***A thriving nonprofit sector that addresses critical community needs, enhances the quality of life and provides opportunities for Fort Bend County residents.***

## PURPOSE & PROCESS

In the summer of 2019, The George Foundation sought input on community assets and needs in Fort Bend County as part of their five year strategic planning process. Using a unique approach, the Foundation leveraged the knowledge and expertise of nonprofit organizations serving residents of Fort Bend County to generate this input. As essential service providers, nonprofit organizations are key partners in the development and delivery of health and human services in their respective communities and have a uniquely comprehensive view of the assets that contribute to community well-being and the needs of the people that they serve.

Accordingly, the needs assessment was developed using a survey of community assets and needs, followed by five focus groups. The survey was sent to 122 nonprofit leaders serving Fort Bend County; 87 (73%) surveys were complete enough to include in the analysis. The results of the survey were compiled and the top ranked needs were identified. A focus group of nonprofit leaders was organized around each area of need to understand more deeply the issue and barriers to accessing needed services and to explore opportunities that existed to diminish the need or improve access.



- The survey included questions on community assets and needs, as well as on nonprofit organizational capacity.
- Survey responses represented every Foundation funding area.

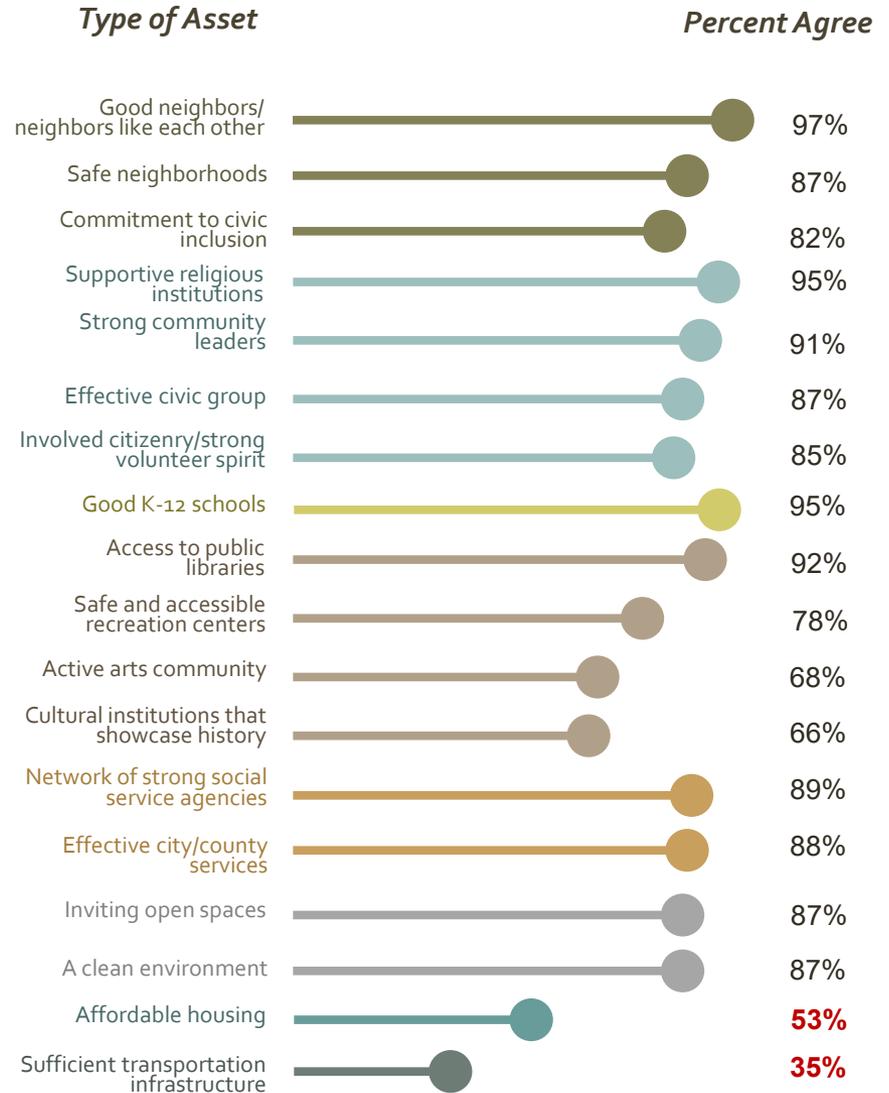


- Five focus groups were held and organized around the top ranked needs:
  - Health and mental health
  - Services for families
  - Youth services
  - Community infrastructure
  - Nonprofit capacity building
- A total of 35 nonprofit executive staff and Board members participated in the focus groups.

Community Assets	Community Needs	NPO Capacities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Leadership</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Neighbors &amp; Neighborhoods</li> <li>• Public Institutions</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Needs</li> <li>• Community Enhancement</li> <li>• Education &amp; Training</li> <li>• Family Services</li> <li>• Health &amp; Mental Health</li> <li>• Public Safety</li> <li>• Services for Youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Adaptive</li> <li>• Operational</li> </ul>

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

Survey and focus group participants had a strong sense of community pride and recognized many assets in the county. Good neighbors, supportive religious institutions and good K-12 schools were identified as the strongest assets in the county. Other strong assets related to safe neighborhoods, civic leadership, culture and recreation, public institutions and the environment. Affordable housing and transportation infrastructure were identified as weaker assets in the county.



## COMMUNITY NEEDS

Despite many strengths in the community, focus group participants recognized that, as one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, community needs are being severely affected by this growth.

Overall, survey participants identified health and mental health, services to families, youth mentoring programs, and community infrastructure as areas with issues that affect many of the people they serve.

The need for mental health services received the highest rating of urgency. Other issues that received high ratings of urgency included public transportation and affordable housing.

<i>Needed Service</i>	<i>% ranking as Urgent</i>	<i>% ranking as Urgent or Affecting Many</i>
Mental health services	35%	78%
Financial education	9%	70%
Public transportation	29%	67%
Parenting education	16%	65%
Services to special populations	19%	65%
Legal assistance	13%	63%
Addiction prevention	18%	63%
Healthcare for indigent	18%	63%
Reliable transportation	17%	62%
Youth mentor program	17%	60%
Affordable housing	23%	58%

## Service Identified as Urgent in each Funding Area



### HEALTH

Mental Health Services



- Need is Urgent
- Affects Many
- Affects Few
- Need is Met



### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Transportation



- Need is Urgent
- Affects Many
- Affects Few
- Need is Met



### SERVICES TO YOUTH

Youth Mentor Program



- Need is Urgent
- Affects Many
- Affects Few
- Need is Met



### FAMILY SERVICES

Parenting Education



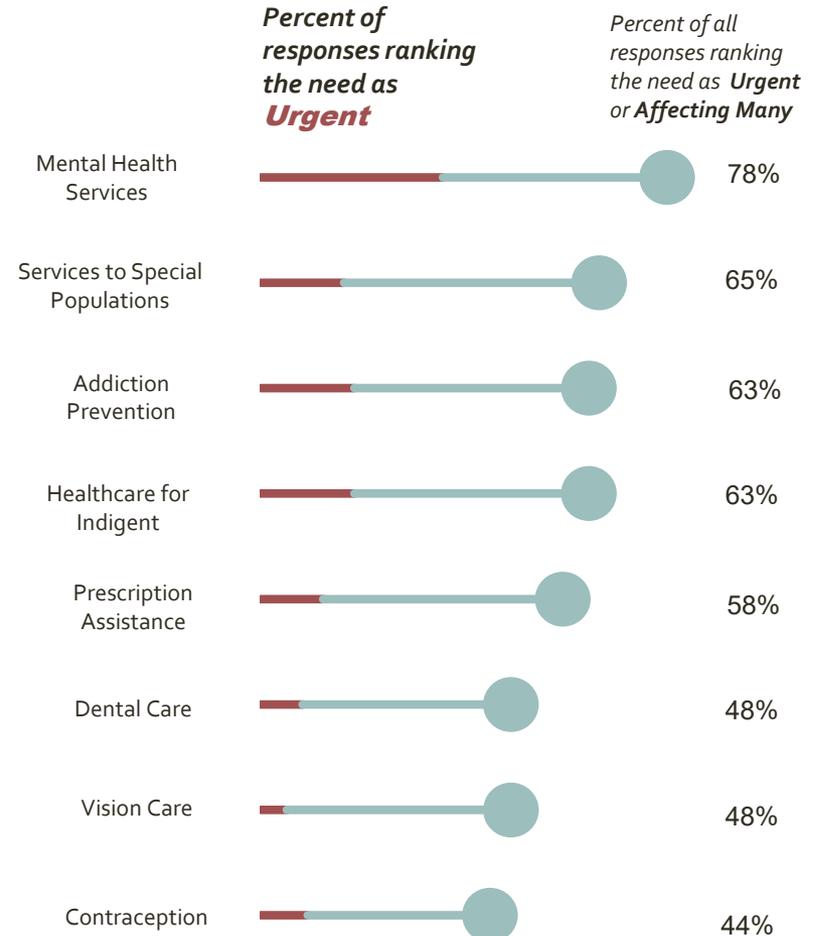
- Need is Urgent
- Affects Many
- Affects Few
- Need is Met

## ISSUES IN HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

A strong majority (59%) of survey participants identified health issues as an urgent need or affecting many of the people they serve. Taken together, only 15% of survey respondents felt that health needs were being met in the county.

Focus group participants helped to describe some of these needs:

- In regard to mental health, focus group participants noted the many contributors to stress and trauma that all Fort Bend residents are exposed to: Flooding, gun violence, the pressures of social media.
- In regard to drugs and addiction prevention services, focus group participants recognized that Fort Bend is on a corridor for drug and sex trafficking but expressed concern that there is little talk about the drug challenge.
- Among special populations, they identified a 'service divide' between those with resources to navigate the social service sector and those that cannot, thereby never receiving care.



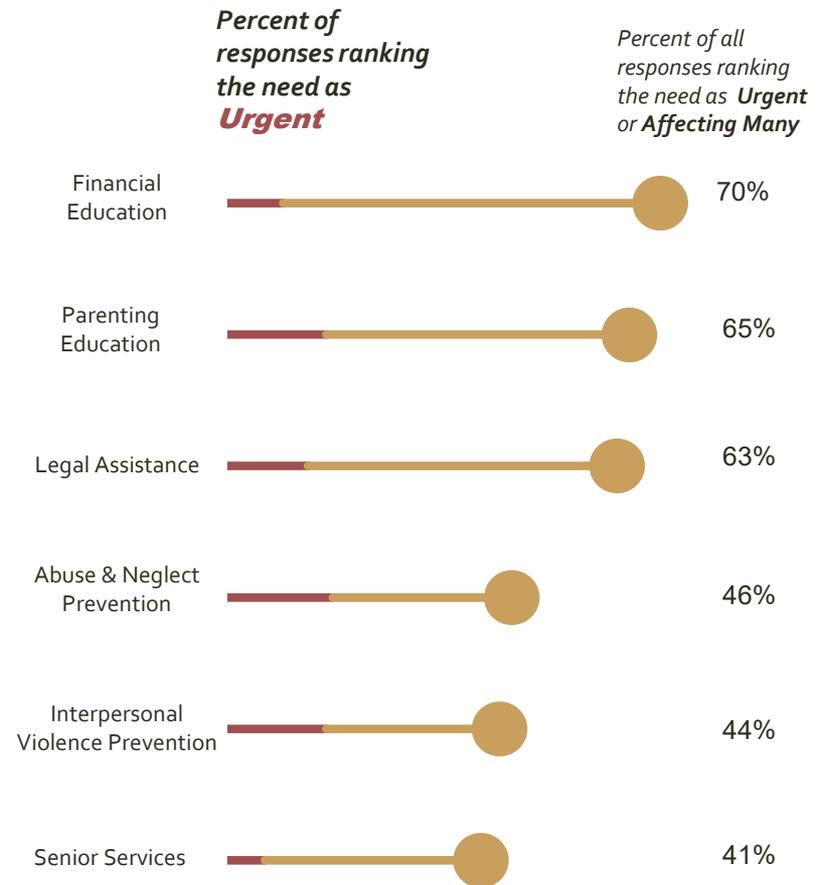
## ISSUES IN SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

Overall, 55% of survey participants identified services for families as an urgent need or affecting many of the people they serve. Only 16% of survey respondents felt family needs were being met.

Focus group participants described these needs, noting:

- Legal assistance is needed for issues relating to child custody, when teens get into a little trouble, and landlord noncompliance with housing maintenance.
- Without financial education and parenting supports, many families can slide into inter-generational poverty.

Perhaps more importantly, participants noted that families in Fort Bend are changing and are facing increasing demands and stresses. While some families are not inclined to seek services because of a strong distrust of social service agencies and government, many families are not familiar with all the resources that are available and/or do not know how to navigate the system of services, highlighting the need for more coordination or the use of navigators.



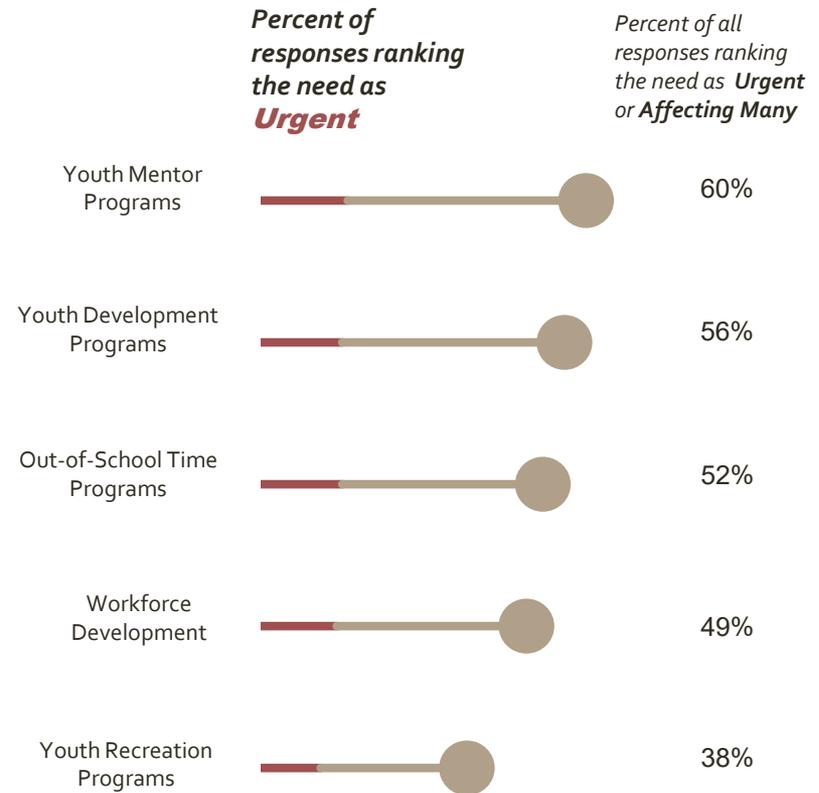
## ISSUES IN YOUTH AND EDUCATION

Half (52%) of survey participants recognized youth and education needs as urgent or affecting many of the people they serve. Nearly a quarter (22%) of survey respondents felt youth and education needs were being met.

Reflecting the survey findings, focus group participants felt that youth academic needs were being met. However, there was considerable concern for the need to help youth develop positive social relationships and life skills.

As the influence of social media grows, more needs to be done to help strengthen youth social skills and provide more opportunities for youth to have responsibilities that will help them develop the skills they need at work. Participants felt that too many efforts address the weaknesses in youth and do little to recognize or support their strengths.

Importantly, participants recognized that services for youth need to be holistic by engaging parents, but noted, in keeping with comments made in the focus group on families, that parents are very hard to engage.

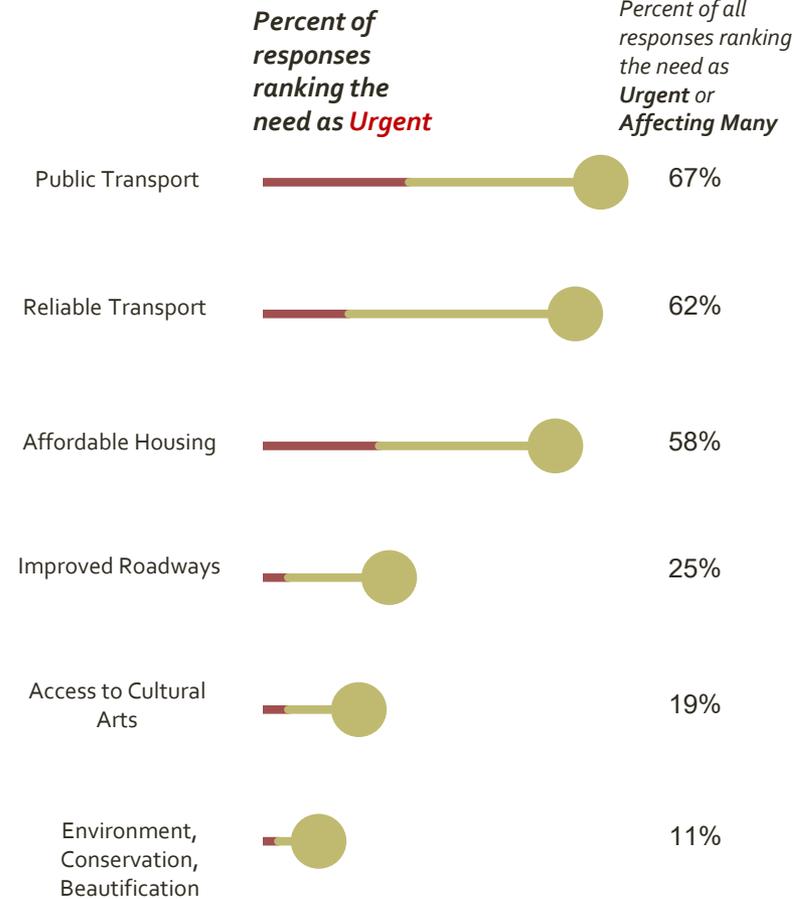


## ISSUES IN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Many (41%) of the survey participants felt that community infrastructure issues were urgent or affecting many of the people they serve. Nearly a quarter (22%) of survey respondents felt community infrastructure issues were being met.

Focus group participants identified two key issues: access to reliable transportation and affordable housing. In regard to public transportation, participants noted that the public transportation system in Fort Bend County is not oriented to the needs of Fort Bend workers who work into evening hours or must go into Houston for work. In regard to other forms of transportation, some families struggle with the costs of gas, insurance, and car repairs which limits their transportation options. Although many social service agencies offer transportation assistance (including gas cards or Uber assistance) these resources are finite and cannot begin to meet demand.

In regard to housing, focus group participants identified negative public attitudes about affordable housing in their communities and landlords not maintaining their properties adequately as major barriers to meeting the need for affordable housing. Additionally, participants noted a lack of resources available for home repair and maintenance.



## COMMON THEMES

Taking all the focus group discussions together, several common themes emerged. Focusing on families, improving service navigation, enhancing collaborations among agencies, and being mindful of the diversity in Fort Bend all rose to the top.

As families change and are met with more demands, families are now a major target of need. Beyond concerns for their financial welfare, families are increasingly exposed to stress and trauma. The costs of recovering from flooding damage is affecting families' ability to provide for their loved ones in ways they expected. The rise and influence of social media is having an impact on youth and yet parents struggle with how to address social media use. The "hyper-sexualized" environment among youth is placing unusually high stress on youth and their families.

Services are available for families and others in need, though there is strong consensus that accessing these services can be a challenge for many. Promoting navigators who can help people become aware of and access services is desired, as well as improving coordination between programs to avoid duplication of services, maximize resources across sectors, and increase the continuity of care.

While Fort Bend nonprofits are supportive of, and engaged in, various collaborations, more needs to be done to meaningfully engage collaborators and share leadership roles. In addition, faith congregations play an important role in meeting needs, but more can be done to integrate them into the social service network.

Finally, nearly every participant noted that the diversity of Fort Bend residents is an asset. Accordingly, acknowledging that diversity when working with residents is important. Ensuring that all nonprofit staff receive cultural awareness and sensitivity training will help to honor that diversity.



### Focus on Families

*Support the development of strong social relationships.*



### Navigation and Better Coordination

*Address "intake hoops" by lowering barriers for families to receive care, e.g. less paperwork, less duplication of questions, etc.*



### More collaboration and coordination

*Improve collaborations, where leadership is shared.*



### Faith-based congregations play an important role

*Integrate the faith community more deeply into the social service network.*

## NONPROFIT CAPACITY

With its commitment to a thriving nonprofit sector, The George Foundation also sought input from nonprofit leaders about their capacity to serve their constituents. Accordingly, the needs assessment survey included questions about nonprofit capacity in four domains:

- Leadership capacity*, including the ability to inspire, provide direction, prioritize, and make decisions;
- Management capacity*, including the ability to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources;
- Adaptive capacity*, including the ability to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes; and
- Operational capacity*, including the ability to implement key organizational and programmatic functions.

In addition to survey responses, a focus group on nonprofit capacity was held with board members of several nonprofits.

Overall, nonprofits serving Fort Bend County report strong organizational capacity. Among the four capacity areas, nonprofits report being strongest in leadership and management capacity, with 54% and 56% reporting these as a strength, respectively.

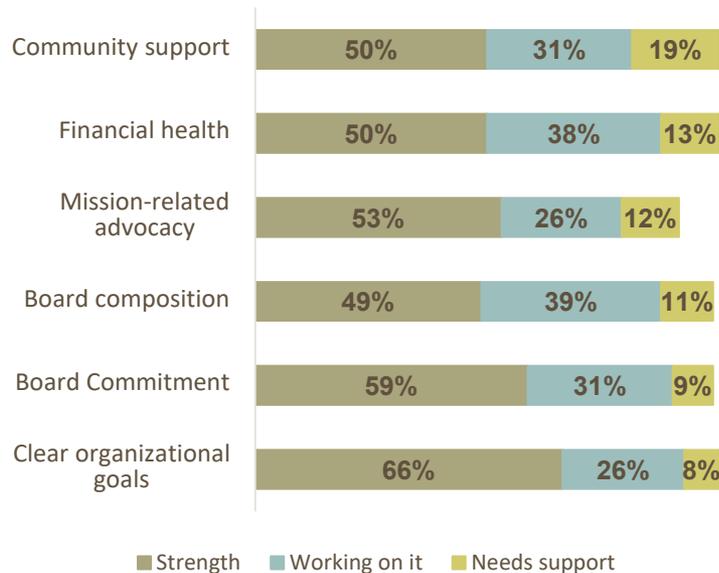
Percent of capacities that NPOs report as strengths or they are working to make stronger		Strength	Working on it	Overall
Leadership	6 indicators about the ability to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, innovate	54%	32%	86%
Management	8 indicators about the ability to monitor, assess, respond to internal & external changes	56%	35%	92%
Adaptive	9 indicators about the ability to ensure effective, efficient use of organizational resources	42%	46%	88%
Operational	7 indicators about the ability to implement key organizational and programmatic functions	41%	39%	80%

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Within Leadership capacity, a majority of nonprofit leaders report having clear organizational goals and strong boards, both in terms of board member commitment and composition. On average, 30% of agencies are working to improve in this area, specifically around strengthening board composition and their financial health. Where agencies report needing support in this area is in building community support for their efforts.

Within the area of Management capacity, nonprofit leaders report having a strong and experienced senior management team, being effective in implementing best practices within their field, and implementing effective program planning and budgeting processes. An average of 38% of agencies reported working to strength their capacity in this area, specifically in volunteer management, staff development, and establishing effective and efficient organizational processes. Where agencies report needing support to improve is in volunteer management, staff development, and monitoring goals and performance targets.

### LEADERSHIP CAPACITY



### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY



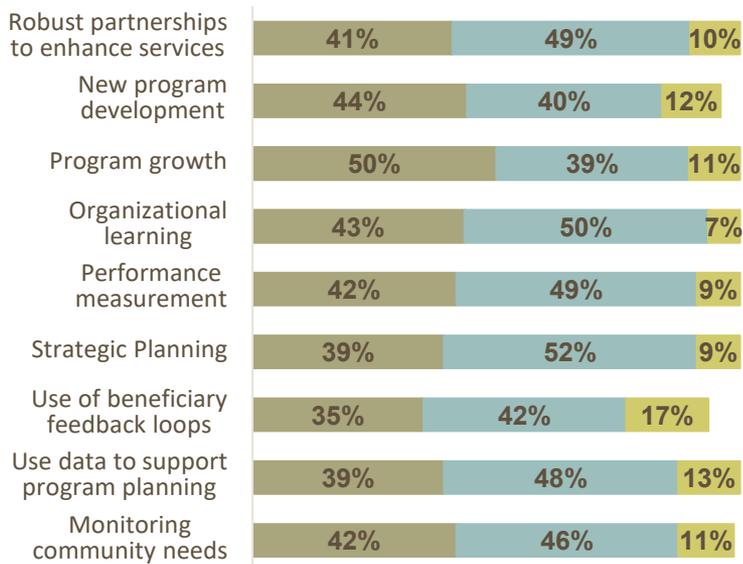
## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: ADAPTIVE & OPERATIONAL

In the areas of adaptive and operational capacity, nearly half of nonprofits serving Fort Bend residents are working to improve some aspect of these areas.

Within the area of adaptive capacity, agencies report feeling strongest in program growth. Efforts where agencies are working to improve their capacities include improving in strategic planning, strengthening their organizational learning capacity, engaging in robust partnerships to enhance their services, and performance measurement. Where agencies report needing support in this area is in using feedback to improve processes or services, using data to support program planning, and developing new programs.

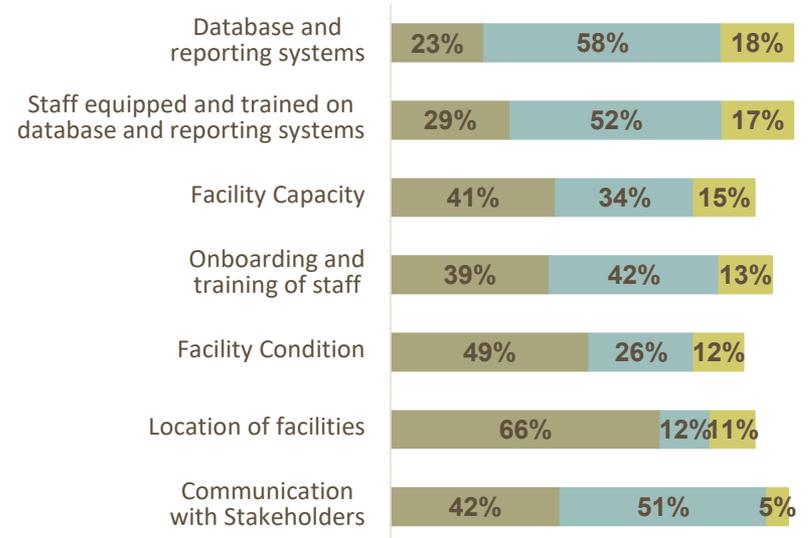
Finally, agencies reported areas of operational capacity as least strong among the capacities; on average, only 37% of agencies report feeling strong in these areas. Facility locations is an area of strength, though addressing facility condition and capacity are areas of improvement. Where agencies report needing support to improve, identifying and developing database and reporting systems and training staff on these systems rank at the top.

### ADAPTIVE CAPACITY



■ Strength ■ Working on it ■ Needs support

### OPERATIONAL CAPACITY



■ Strength ■ Working on it ■ Needs support

## POTENTIAL ROLES FOR FOUNDATIONS

Finally, nonprofit leaders agree that apart from direct funding, foundations can play other important roles to support them in their efforts. Among the various roles that were considered, most nonprofits felt that the most powerful role is in promoting and supporting the development of partnerships or collaborations around specific issues. Advocacy, strategic investments in targeted issues, and support for innovations also received broad support.

Apart from these general roles, focus group participants noted three other efforts unique to the needs of Fort Bend County that would be valuable for foundations to support:

- Raise awareness among nonprofits serving Fort Bend residents about the importance of addressing the needs of all family members.
- Create and/or endorse a cultural awareness and diversity training program for nonprofit staff and board.
- Create an incentive fund that could be used with program participants.
- Support agencies in finding other sources of funds for sustainability.

Importantly, although nonprofit leaders recognized the value of other roles that foundations can play, many emphasized that funds for direct services are essential, especially in these times when support for the social safety net is fraying at the federal level.

42%

agree foundations can help by promoting partnerships or collaborations around specific issues



36%

agree foundations can help by engaging in advocacy around specific issues



31%

agree foundations can help by making strategic investments in targeted areas



25%

agree foundations can help by supporting innovations in service provision



# Acknowledgements

*Special thanks to all the people who participated in the survey and focus groups.*

