

Community Agencies Grow Stronger with Management Support Services

Introduction

Data presented in this section came from the Mt. Baldy United Way's Service Provider Survey of Organizational Needs. The survey was conducted during the first half of 2003. Seventy-three agencies returned completed questionnaires. Respondents were asked to prioritize their agency's need in the areas of organization, management training and assistance, client participation, expansion, and volunteer participation. Questions were also asked about inter-agency collaborations, use of outcomes measurement, funding sources, and use of technology. Finally, agencies were asked about financial and travel limitations for staff and volunteer training.

Survey Results

Organizational Needs

- Overall, the single most important organizational need is in the area of grant writing. Almost half (47%) of all agencies responding to the survey indicated that grant writing is one of their top three needs.
- Other often-mentioned organizational needs include: marketing; special events fund raising; resource development; volunteer recruitment, management, and training; board development; and outcomes evaluation.
- Few agencies indicated a need for financial management systems (9%), conflict resolution assistance (8%), personnel management (5%), computer-related assistance (2%) or communications skills (2%).

Methods of receiving management training and assistance

- Most agencies indicated that workshops (76%) and consultants (86%) are the best way to receive training and assistance.
- About one-third of agencies indicated that conferences and community forums are useful.
- Less than one-fourth of the agencies responded that written materials, computer databases and analysis, referral banks, library research, or remote technical assistance is valued as a management tool.

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Barriers to Client Participation

- Over half of the agencies which responded indicated that the lack of transportation to an agency's program site was a main barrier to client participation.
- Over half of the agencies which responded indicated that the lack of knowledge of an agency's program was a main barrier to client participation.
- Only eight agencies mentioned language incompatibility as a barrier to client participation.
- Twelve of the agency responses, nine of them from the Mt. Baldy United Way service area, indicated that the inability of clients to pay for services is one of the top two barriers to client participation.

Barriers to Agency Expansion

- The most often cited reason for agency expansion is lack of funding. Fifty-six (81%) agencies indicated that funding is one of the top two barriers to expansion.
- The second most often listed barrier to expansion is lack of space.
- Attracting personnel, both staff and volunteers, was also cited as a major concern.

Barriers to Volunteer Participation

- Lack of staff for volunteer recruitment and management is the greatest barrier to volunteer participation in over half of the agencies surveyed.
- Lack of space for volunteers and lack of transportation for volunteers are also seen as barriers to volunteer participation.
- Fifteen (23%) agencies felt their programs did not lend themselves well to volunteer participation.
- Two agencies indicated that their location was perceived as unsafe by potential volunteers.

Interagency Collaboration

- 88% percent of agencies surveyed indicated that they had participated in a collaboration to implement a program within the last year.
- 56% of the agencies surveyed indicated that they had participated in three or more collaborations within the past year.
- Only 11% of agencies surveyed indicated that they had not participated in any collaboration within the past year.

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Measuring Outcomes

- 85% of agencies indicated that they performed some type of program measurement or monitoring.
- 50% of agencies indicated that they currently use an outcome-based measurement system for program improvement and management. Another 13% indicated that they would be doing so within the next twelve months.
- 35% of agencies monitored program goals but did not indicate using outcome-based measurement.
- Only 1 agency did not indicate using any program measurement.

Funding Sources

- 65% of agencies surveyed indicated that government sources provided the highest proportion of their budget.
- 71% of agencies reported receiving government funding.
- 56% of agencies reported receiving contributions from individuals.
- 49% of agencies reported receiving some funding from foundations.
- 39% reported special events as a source of funding.

Tracking Clients

- 56% of agencies reported using either spreadsheets or specialized software to track and manage client information.
- 35% of agencies reported using paper files to track and manage client information.

Staff and Volunteer Training

- 56% of agencies reported that they would be willing to send someone 50 miles or further for training. 23% reported they would send someone 100 miles.
- 2 agencies indicated that they wouldn't be willing to send anyone for training.
- 15% of agencies reported they would be willing to spend \$100 to send someone to a ½ day training seminar. 84% indicated that they would spend at least \$15 to send someone to a ½ day seminar.
- 7.5% of agencies reported that they would not spend any money to send someone to a ½ day seminar.

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Conclusions

- Economic concerns top the list of barriers to improving and expanding agency programs and services.
- Staffing needs, often related to availability and affordability, are also a concern. Agencies indicate a need (and lack of ability) to hire grant writers, marketers, fund raising personnel, and volunteer managers.
- Affordable or available space is also a barrier to growth. More room is needed to house programs, staff and volunteers.
- Connecting clients to services is an issue. More potential clients need to be made aware of social services available and also have the ability to get to those services.
- San Bernardino County is in need of a comprehensive, coordinated, Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS)-compliant, on-line database, by which one entity, such as a 2-1-1 provider, could provide up-to-date disaster coordination and agency service information to the entire county.