Uncertain Times: What Should Nonprofits Be Thinking About?  
Friday, March 24th, 2017 at Milne Hall 200

Roundtable Findings

**Millennials:**

- **What does the term mean to everyone?**
  - Comments from a Millennial point of view:
    - Millennials seek to have a greater sense of community and engage with others; relating to that, social media is a symptom or a means to an end, not the end itself
    - Millennials would rather engage in causes with time ("it's easier") than with money (after thought: is that because there are fewer opportunities for upward mobility or in spite of that? Or both?)
    - Not as interested in leadership positions because seeking greater work-life balance
  - Comments from non-Millennial generation:
    - Hard to define
    - Can only base definition on interactions with people of that age, such as:
      - Millennials on non-profit boards just haven't worked out (specifics were not pursued during the discussion)
      - It's a very different mind-set
      - Millennials seek recognition (deservedly? undeservedly?)
      - Millennials are difficult to manage as staff
  - Ended with the observation: what generation hasn't had misunderstandings and identity clashes with the one that follows and precedes it?

- **What have orgs done to address Millennials?**
  - Employ them
  - Challenge according to one self-proclaimed Boomer: Millennials are ready and willing to move; opportunity > loyalty
• What can an organization do?
  o Engage more at board level
  o the managers/directors in the group liked the idea of mentor/mentee relationships

• How does reaching Millennials relate to current funding approaches?
  o Tailoring events and "ask campaigns" to them
  o Engage early through high school and college giving/volunteer opportunities
    (focus on the volunteer aspect)

**Increased Need:**

• What does this term mean to everyone?
  o More funding, foster families, shelter, more resources
  o Engaging the younger generation

• What are some examples that come to mind when you think about this?
  o Millennials use social media to communicate and advocate for this increased need

• What has your organization already done to address this?
  o Informational sessions, promoting on Facebook, radio, etc.

• What should other nonprofits or government do to address this?
  o Press releases, brochures to address this issue.
  o Personal interaction
  o Funding should be available for whatever the biggest need is
  o Capacity-building grants
    ▪ Helps identify how you can expand your needs

• How does it impact your mission?
  o Increased need speaks directly to mission statement
  o The clearer your mission is the more transparent you can be with others

• What can your organization do? What would it need to accomplish this?
  o Hire a full-time or part-time person to help alleviate some of the need
  o Better management system
  o Increased need can be staffing, location, and infrastructure
  o Invest in fundraising
  o Sometimes organizations do not have the capacity to help these individuals
  o How nonprofits are going to respond to Budget cuts
  o Collaboration on programs
  o Nonprofits need to be smarter and more distinguishable
  o Never be complacent!
  o Donors respond when they hear organizations working together
    ▪ Want to make sure their money is being spent wisely and making an impact
Policy Advocacy & Relationship with Government:

- **What does this term mean to everyone?**
  - Education, direct asks, about policy and funding
  - What counts as advocacy vs. lobbying? What needs to be tracked?

- **What has your organization already done to address this?**
  - Just developing advocacy Program
  - Cultivating relationships at local and state levels
  - Multiple topics- how do we choose one
  - Clearly need more education on legalities around what nonprofits need to do.

- **What techniques have worked?**
  - Budget sign on letters
    - Specific asks of representative
  - Engaging consumers without exploitation

- **How does this relate to your current funding approaches?**
  - Programs leading/closing
  - Does fighting for funding mean fighting each other?

- **How does it impact your mission?**
  - Association as an organization not at risk but members are

Collaboration:

- **What does this term mean to everyone?**
  - Opportunities
  - Funding
  - Relationship-building
  - Expertise
  - Information sharing

- **What has your organization already done to address this?**
  - “Next level up”
  - (Network issues)
    - Everything is connected

- **What can your organization do? What would it need to accomplish this?**
  - Small vs. big issues/ insurance/defense

- **What should other nonprofits or government do to address this?**
  - Maximizing resources/sharing information
    - Grants and services
    - Next level up
Task forces
- Relationship building
- Skill set/sharing expertise
- Collaboration creates opportunities
- Small providers vs. large “monopolies” providers
- Bridge building
Neutral facilitators
- Get ahead of the curve/insurance

Nonprofit Infrastructure: (First Session)

- **Uncertainty**
  - Infrastructure is not always protected.
  - How to find avenues to preserve that?

- **Secondary:**
  - Resource Development

- Need to think about a succession plan with senior staff members.
- Focus on what are they connections that this staff manage or development.
- Bring those connections to the Board or another staff.
- Value in convincing staff to share the richness of the relationships they have developed with their connections.

- **Training essential:**
  - A boomer’s perception of professional development might be different than that of millennials.
  - How do you really TEACH the culture of these relationships?
  - Teach what connections value in the relationship, the art of networking.

- **Potential for downsizing:**
  - A potential loss—the development of a career path.
  - If young people want a growth opportunity and it does not exist, you will lose that staff member.
  - Nurture a path in leadership development.
    - Create a ladder by hiring in a greener employee, bump the other workers up the responsibility ladder to fill a vacant higher position.

- **Trainings:**
  - Workers need the opportunity to build your knowledge-base.
  - It’s a reason why people move on.
  - Nonprofits are notoriously bad as this because attention is on other priorities (like resource development).
• When we make cuts, we nickel and dime admin. Costs? Challenge FTE benefits (go part-time) to save money, when push comes to shove.

• Perhaps organizations would benefit by looking at infrastructure (organizational development) issues primarily.

• Then we slipped into a general discussion of the AHCA and how it is impacting our organizations. (Especially interesting was the talk about how to separate our personal indignation from our professional responsibilities).

• MAKE CHANGE IN THE WORLD THROUGH SMALL ACTIONS.

**Nonprofit Infrastructure: (Second Session)**

• What does the term mean to me?
  o Property and systems
  o Website

• How do you achieve success in this area?
  o Technology development
  o Access infrastructure grant
  o Obtain grants to fund capital improvements to better meet needs

• What should other NP’s or government do to address infrastructure issues?
  o Change contracting limitations
  o Working in coalitions and statewide (citywide) associations to address common goals
  o How can organizations learn to have a future-orientation when budgeting?
    ▪ Long-term planning even though it’s difficult
    ▪ Also difficult because client base varies but planning can help.
  o How does this issue impact your current funding approached?
    ▪ Need an attitude of flexibility
    ▪ We discussed the possibility of turning down contracts which are intrinsically underfunded
      • Easier said than done
      • If everyone is pushing back, the broader changes can materialize.