

# Chautauqua Nonprofit Capacity Partnership

## Capacity Assessment Aggregate Report

December 2019



Community  
Wealth Partners

by SHARE OUR STRENGTH

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Background

The *Chautauqua Nonprofit Capacity Partnership* (“the Partnership”) seeks to support and enhance the capacity of nonprofit organizations across Chautauqua county. To understand the unique strengths, challenges and opportunities across nonprofits in the county, the Partnership engaged the consultants from Community Wealth Partners to conduct a capacity assessment of Chautauqua County nonprofits.

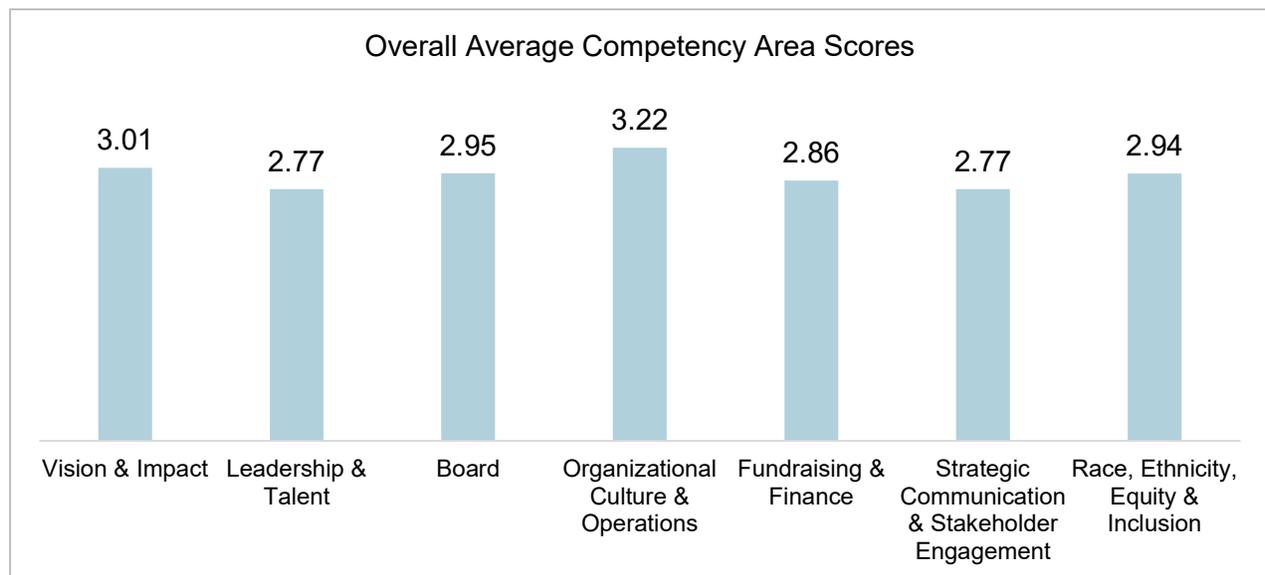
The first step in this process was to develop and administer a survey based on Community Wealth Partners’ Capacity Indicator, a market-tested tool that incorporates input from both internal and external stakeholders into a comprehensive view of organizations’ strengths and growth opportunities. A total of 420 respondents, representing 36 Chautauqua County nonprofits, completed the survey in October and November in 2019.

Next, in December, we convened a series of focus groups in which we shared and discussed selected survey findings with a subset of nonprofit staff, leadership, and board members (five to six per group).

This report summarizes our findings from the research and includes recommended next steps for the Partnership.

### Key findings

Overall, organizations scored highest in Organizational Culture and Operations (3.22 average), followed by Vision & Impact (3.01). The lowest overall scores were in Leadership & Talent and Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement (both 2.77).



Importantly, these (and all scores reported in this report) should not be considered absolute, standalone measurements; rather, they are intended to highlight *relative* strengths and challenges within and across Chautauqua nonprofits. Further information on these variations can be found in the Detailed Findings section as well as the appendix.

Furthermore, a strong average score here does not necessarily indicate *uniformly* strong performance within a given competency area. Within each competency area, scores varied widely by organization, by sub-competency, and by question. The following sections of this report are intended to illuminate some of that underlying variation.

Combining input from the survey and focus groups, we have identified the following themes and recommendations for the Partnership's consideration:

- **Chautauqua County nonprofits have established solid foundations for success.** Organizations received strong scores on core, fundamental competencies, such as vision, programming, culture, finance, and governance. Leadership and staff are highly invested in and motivated by their organizations' missions. With these areas in order, they can focus their energies instead on scale and sustainability.
- **The region's small size creates a sense of scarcity and competition.** Nonprofits across the region rely on the same limited pools of resources and talent. As a result, they are incentivized to compete rather than collaborate with their peers (see, for instance, the communication gap between the north and south counties). By connecting nonprofits to new sources of funding and candidates, funders can help create a sense of abundance and lower the perceived cost of collaboration.
- **Nonprofits struggle to connect with communities of color.** Organizations understand the importance of race equity and want to create more opportunities for people of color; yet both the nonprofits and the people they serve remain predominantly white. With funders' help, they could strengthen their outreach to diverse populations (both in the marketing of their programs and the recruitment of their candidates).
- **Staff and volunteers have more positive perceptions of their organizations' competencies than board members and leadership do.** On average, staff and volunteers gave their organizations higher ratings than board members and leadership did. This finding suggests, hearteningly, that organizational challenges are felt most strongly by those with the greatest power to enact change. Still, board members and leaders would benefit from funder support in both addressing challenges and celebrating wins.

## METHODOLOGY

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### Survey

The Capacity Indicator survey asks each respondent to answer 56 questions, grouped into seven major *competency areas* that represent the knowledge, skills, and behaviors exhibited by the most effective nonprofit organizations, as identified by Community Wealth Partners and the Partnership. Each competency area comprises several sub-competencies on more specific topics, each of which includes about three to five questions. Below is a high-level overview of the competency areas and sub-competencies; additional detail on the topics assessed can be found in the Detailed Findings section below.

For each question, respondents select from four qualitative responses the one that best describes the current state of their organization. For example:

#### **Sample Survey Question**

*Competency: Vision & Impact*

*Sub-Competency: Strategic Direction*

1. Shared vision: Our organization...
  - a. **does not have a clear vision** for what we hope to achieve through our work.
  - b. **is developing a vision** for what we hope to achieve through our work.
  - c. **has a vision that could be further clarified or communicated across our organization** for what we hope to achieve through our work.
  - d. **has a clear, compelling vision that is shared across our organization** for what we hope to achieve through our work.

Specifically, the competency areas explored in the survey are:

- **Vision & Impact:** The Vision & Impact competency examines questions related to the overall vision and strategic direction of an organization, as well as an organization's capacity to understand and measure impact against strategic milestones.

*Sub-competencies: Strategic direction, Programming & partnerships, Using data*

- **Leadership & Talent:** The Leadership & Talent competency examines questions related to an organization's leadership, personnel, and human resources.

*Sub-competencies: Leadership, Succession planning, Human resources*

- **Board:** The Board competency examines questions related to an organization's board in terms of effectiveness, governance, composition, and diversity.

*Sub-competencies: Board vision & role, Board composition*

- **Organizational Culture & Operations:** The Organizational Culture & Operations competency examines questions related to an organization's culture and systems for learning, growth and operations.

*Sub-competencies: Culture, Internal communications, Knowledge & learning, Operations & logistics*

- **Fundraising & Finance:** The Fundraising and Finance competency examines questions related to the ability to fundraise and maintain healthy financials.

*Sub-competencies: Funding sources, Financial planning & health*

- **Strategic Communications & Stakeholder Engagement:** The Strategic Communications & Stakeholder Engagement competency examines questions related to an organization's ability to communicate effectively with key audiences, as well as its overall awareness and engagement with key stakeholders.

*Sub-competencies: External messaging, Engaging stakeholders, Policy & advocacy*

- **Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion:** The Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion competency examines questions related to an organization's ability to be inclusive and aware of the impact of race, ethnicity, and other demographic identities on its work. This work is not just about acknowledging "diversity" (the differences between people) - it is about understanding concepts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. and pursuing equity (acknowledging different people need different solutions to correct for historic disadvantages in the community) and inclusion (giving these different disadvantaged groups in the community decision-making power).

Knowledge and skills around race, ethnicity, equity and inclusion are vital to many different areas of a successful organization, from hiring practices to community engagement. For that reason, the questions related to the Race, Ethnicity, Equity & Inclusion competency are interspersed throughout the survey, included with the other competencies to which they are relevant. In this report and in organizations' individual reports, these questions are analyzed within their other competencies and collectively as the "Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion" competency area.

*Sub-competencies: Knowledge and culture, External practices, Internal practices*

### *Focus groups*

We held five focus groups with a total of 22 individuals – staff, board members and executive directors from Chautauqua County nonprofits – many of whom also participated in the survey. During the focus groups, participants were shown a set of graphs illustrating high-level findings from the survey and asked for their reactions to each, with follow-up questions tailored to their roles. To help participants feel comfortable sharing candid feedback, we grouped them by role – board members, staff, or executive directors – and assured them that no comment would be attributed to any individual in this aggregate report.

For more information on our research methodology, please see Appendix C.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### Scores by Competency Area

#### *Vision & Impact*

| Competency      |      | Sub-Competency             |      | Question                                    |      |
|-----------------|------|----------------------------|------|---|------|
| Vision & Impact | 3.01 | Strategic Direction        | 3.05 | Shared Vision                               | 3.29 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Goal-Setting                                | 3.10 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Strategic Planning                          | 2.77 |
|                 |      | Programming & Partnerships | 3.09 | Strength of Programming                     | 3.35 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Strategic Partnerships                      | 2.91 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Equity-Informed Programming                 | 3.02 |
|                 |      | Using Data                 | 2.87 | Measuring Impact                            | 3.02 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Data-Driven Decision-Making                 | 3.16 |
|                 |      |                            |      | Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion Data | 2.43 |

High scores in Shared Vision (3.29) and Strength of Programming (3.35) indicate that these organizations have developed clear, compelling visions and effective programs – both of which contribute to strong progress on their goals. Focus groups validated that neither organizational vision nor programming is a major pain point.

Low scores point to areas where greater consistency is needed: analyzing data disaggregated by race (Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion Data: 2.43), and using strategic plans to guide decision-making (Strategic Planning: 2.77).

#### *Leadership & Talent*

| Competency          |      | Sub-Competency      |      | Question  |      |
|---------------------|------|---------------------|------|---|------|
| Leadership & Talent | 2.77 | Leadership          | 3.26 | Leveraging Our Vision and Strategic Plan                        | 3.11 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Adaptability  | 3.40 |
|                     |      | Succession Planning | 2.18 | Succession Planning for Leadership                              | 2.18 |
|                     |      | Human Resources     | 2.87 | Hiring  | 2.79 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Cultural Competence in Staff                                    | 3.09 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Retention   | 2.99 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Compensation  | 2.45 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Professional Development  | 2.89 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Performance Management  | 2.69 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Internal Policies Around Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion | 2.68 |
|                     |      |                     |      | Volunteers and Committees                                       | 3.42 |

A high score in Volunteers and Committees (3.42) highlights the organizations' consistent and effective use of volunteers and/or committees to augment the work of paid staff and achieve goals. In most competency areas, volunteers tended to give their organizations higher scores than board, staff, or leadership did (see the Additional Insights section below for additional detail on this difference). Taken together, these findings suggest that Chautauqua County nonprofits are skilled at creating volunteer experiences that are mutually beneficial to the volunteers and the organizations they support. This is particularly important given nonprofits' reliance on volunteers due to limited funding sources in the region.

Additionally, a 3.40 average rating in Adaptability suggests that these leaders are committed to continuous improvement: both capitalizing on their successes and learning from their failures. (Accordingly, leaders tended to give their organizations lower scores than board, staff, or volunteers did.)

The lowest average score in this competency area, and in the survey overall, was in Succession Planning (2.18); the score suggests that the average organization has had some discussion on the subject but does not have a formal succession plan in place for leadership. That description resonated with participants in the board focus group: “[Succession planning is] an area we want to and are working to address,” one said. “We have a very talented ED, and many of us have lost sleep over the prospect of losing her. We’ve had frank discussion with her about the need to address this.” Most of the new executive directors reported that they had started in their roles with very little training or transition support; they had found comfort in opportunities to connect with other leaders who had faced similar challenges.

Compensation is also an area in need of strengthening (2.45); scores suggest that employees are not consistently compensated at market rates. In a focus group, a board member validated that “Most small organizations in the county are unable to pay the compensation these people deserve.” They posited that the adverse effects are greatest on non-leadership staff: “Executive directors are locked in because they believe in the organization and mission, but that second level of staff is so vital and can easily be drawn away by better compensation.” Multiple groups cited a recent change in the minimum wage rate as an added challenge in this area. However, a staff member recognized that compensation can come in many forms: “The executive director finds other ways to compensate people, like flexible schedules and appreciation.”

**Board**

| Competency |      | Sub-Competency      |      | Question                                  |      |
|------------|------|---------------------|------|---|------|
| Board      | 2.95 | Board Vision & Role | 3.15 | Vision and Strategy                       | 3.14 |
|            |      |                     |      | Governance, Including Financial Oversight | 3.31 |
|            |      |                     |      | Board Role                                | 3.29 |
|            |      |                     |      | Management Review                         | 3.11 |
|            |      | Board Composition   | 2.74 | Board Contribution                        | 2.89 |
|            |      |                     |      | Board Member Recruitment                  | 3.04 |
|            |      |                     |      | Diversity of Experience                   | 2.82 |
|            |      |                     |      | Diversity of Composition                  | 2.38 |

The data suggests that boards excel in both Board Governance and Board Role, which encompass both *awareness* and *execution* of board responsibilities. However, focus group participants were skeptical, suggesting that not all board members are clear on what is expected of them and would benefit from added guidance. One board member noted: “In my experience, there’s always the assumption that a new board member knows their role when they come on. And that’s not true; ... they don’t [always] know the real role, the boundaries of a board member versus the leader and staff.” They suggested that boards in the county would benefit from both clearer direction from leadership and resources to help them train new members.

Based on this feedback, we disaggregated the survey data by role and found that board members gave an average rating of 3.46 in Board Role, whereas staff and leadership ratings were 3.02 and 3.08, respectively. In some cases, leadership would appreciate deeper

involvement from board members: “I need real help, not just ideas and suggestions,” one executive director said.

The scores also indicate that boards tend to be relatively homogeneous; organizations scored an average 2.38 in Diversity of Composition and 2.82 in Diversity of Experience. Both staff and board members spoke to these challenges: “We struggle to get diversity on board and volunteer committees,” a staff member said. “We can’t connect to the right people who will open doors.” A board member echoed: “Any boards I currently serve on and those I’ve been on in the past 15 to 20 years are very minimally representative.” Executive directors spoke highly of term limit policies as opportunities to infuse their boards with new, more diverse perspectives, but many still struggled to find candidates for those roles. Board members mentioned a past United Way program called Project Blueprint and suggested that a similar intervention would help them build a more diverse pipeline for their boards.

*Organizational Culture & Operations*

| Competency                          |      | Sub-Competency          |      | Question  |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|---|------|
| Organizational Culture & Operations | 3.22 | Culture                 | 3.31 | Values  | 3.51 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Living Out Our Values in Practice                               | 3.28 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Open Conversations About Race, Ethnicity, Equity, And Inclusion | 3.14 |
|                                     |      | Internal Communications | 3.28 | Messaging from Leadership to Staff                              | 3.54 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Open Lines of Communication                                     | 3.03 |
|                                     |      | Knowledge & Learning    | 3.25 | Focus on Innovation and Learning                                | 3.02 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Sharing Outcomes Across the Internal Team                       | 3.46 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Knowledge of Race, Ethnicity, Equity, And Inclusion Concepts    | 3.29 |
|                                     |      | Operations & Logistics  | 3.05 | Operating Processes and Systems                                 | 3.13 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Technology and Systems  | 2.94 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Facilities  | 3.06 |
|                                     |      |                         |      | Back-Office Essentials  | 3.07 |

Organizational Culture & Operations was the competency area with the strongest overall score, with scores above 3.0 in all sub-competencies. Scores were high for organizations with both new and seasoned executive directors; messaging from Leadership to Staff (3.54) and Values (3.51) represented the top individual scores. A staff member mentioned the effects of leadership-to-staff communication on the day-to-day work experience: “There’s good transparency from leadership where the finances stand and what money the organization has. ... It makes a huge difference in lowering stress levels for people.”

Technology & Systems is the area most in need of improvement, with an average score of 2.94. This suggests that organizations are investing in technology and systems only on an ad hoc basis. The 3.07 score in Facilities indicates that a typical organization has adequate space but struggles with upkeep; some focus group participants mentioned that even attaining adequate space was a challenge. To become more effective, organizations might consider more proactive, strategic investments in their space and tools.

## Fundraising & Finance

| Competency            |      | Sub-Competency              |      | Question                           |      |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|
| Fundraising & Finance | 2.86 | Funding Sources             | 2.75 | Fundraising Planning               | 2.66 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Fundraising Activities             | 2.84 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Current Donor Relationships        | 2.89 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Donor Cultivation                  | 2.61 |
|                       |      | Financial Planning & Health | 2.97 | Revenue Diversification            | 2.66 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Cash Flow                          | 2.64 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Operating Reserves                 | 2.70 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Expense Management                 | 3.47 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Financial Forecasting              | 2.62 |
|                       |      |                             |      | Accounting and Financial Reporting | 3.76 |

The highest Fundraising & Finance scores were in the Financial Planning & Health sub-competency: organizations scored an average of 3.76 (the highest individual question score in the survey) in Accounting and Financial Reporting and a 3.47 in Expense Management. This tells us that most organizations are reliably performing their accounting and financial reporting responsibilities, and they are proactively working to control short- and long-term expenses. Given limited funding, focus group participants reported investing significantly in these functions.

In contrast, scores were lower in the Funding Sources sub-competency, with the lowest on Donor Cultivation. Focus group participants were not surprised at this result: “We have struggled to figure out the right types of fundraising activities to do and how to have more reach,” one of them noted. “We live in a very rural county, so there aren’t a lot of resources and a lot of competition for the same people to give.” This sense of competition can impede the sharing of information and building of relationships between nonprofits in similar fields. There is a particularly strong communication gap between north-county and south-county organizations. As one executive director put it, “Opening up avenues of communication across north and south feels critical. There’s lots for organizations to share with each other.” Other participants mentioned insufficient staff capacity as a barrier to consistent fundraising.

## Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

| Competency                                       |      | Sub-Competency        |      | Question                                       |      |
|--|------|-----------------------|------|--|------|
| Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement | 2.77 | External Messaging    | 3.04 | Consistent & Compelling External Communication | 3.01 |
|  |      |                       |      | Use of Digital & Social Media                  | 3.07 |
|  |      | Engaging Stakeholders | 2.60 | Current Stakeholder Engagement                 | 2.67 |
|  |      |                       |      | New Stakeholder Identification                 | 2.41 |
|  |      |                       |      | Inclusive Planning                             | 2.72 |
|  |      | Policy & Advocacy     | 2.67 | Policy Awareness                               | 2.67 |

Within Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement, scores were strongest within the External Messaging sub-competency: Use of Digital & Social Media (3.07) and Consistent & Compelling External Communication (3.01). These numbers suggest that organizations are leveraging the communication tools at their disposal but not consistently. Multiple executive directors mentioned wished their organizations had better access to marketing and social media services, as free, wide-reaching online platforms are an efficient way for them to reach stakeholders.

The area most in need of attention is stakeholder engagement, both for new and current stakeholders (2.41 and 2.67, respectively). In the context of the fundraising discussion mentioned above, focus group participants mentioned the small size of the Chautauqua community, which both limits the number of potential stakeholders and puts newcomers at a disadvantage. “It’s a small funding community. Everyone knows where the money is, so [fundraising is done through] personal relationships.” Because of the perceived scarcity of resources, nonprofits are incentivized to guard these relationships closely. Fittingly, organizations run by seasoned executive directors tend to see higher scores in both Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement and Fundraising & Finance.

Focus group participants also noted the difficulty of engaging diverse audiences with their programming. “We’ve tried to do programming outreach to reach broader ethnic minorities,” one executive director reported, “but that doesn’t seem to reach the intended audience and create change. We tried to reach out and find out what programs would be of interest, but there’s a misunderstanding about what our organization does.”

### *Race, Ethnicity, Equity & Inclusion*

| Competency                          |      | Sub-Competency      |      | Question  |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------------------|------|---|------|
| Race, Ethnicity, Equity & Inclusion | 2.94 | Knowledge & Culture | 3.21 | Knowledge of Race, Ethnicity, Equity, And Inclusion Concepts    | 3.29 |
|                                     |      |                     |      | Open Conversations About Race, Ethnicity, Equity, And Inclusion | 3.14 |
|                                     |      | External Practices  | 2.87 | Equity-Informed Programming                                     | 3.02 |
|                                     |      |                     |      | Inclusive Planning  | 2.72 |
|                                     |      | Internal Practices  | 2.73 | Internal Policies Around Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion | 2.68 |
|                                     |      |                     |      | Cultural Competence in Staff                                    | 3.09 |
|                                     |      |                     |      | Race, Ethnicity, Equity, And Inclusion Data                     | 2.43 |

In multiple focus groups, participants remarked that they were surprised to see such a high score in this competency area; sub-competency scores point to a gap between knowledge and practice. Knowledge & Culture scores (3.29 and 3.14) indicate that organizations understand key ideas related to Race, Ethnicity, Equity, and Inclusion (REEI) and are willing to discuss them internally, but Internal and External Practices scores (2.73 and 2.87) tell us that implementation is inconsistent. The lowest score in this competency area relates to REEI data: a 2.43 score suggests that organizations are sometimes, but not consistently, disaggregating internal data by race when it could be helpful and appropriate. Similarly, in internal policies, a score of 2.68 describes an organization that regularly *assesses* but only occasionally *implements* changes in the interest of becoming more equitable in their policies and practices.

A board member confirmed that this finding resonated, saying: “Having policies and conversations and a set of organizational standards that strive toward equity and diversity is good, but it’s meaningless if we don’t get the people in there. ... I’ve been on boards where we talked a lot about changing the racial composition of programming, our staff, and our boards, but it turned out to be a lot of talk for years and nothing really happened. People felt good for having the conversations, but we weren’t seeing the change we needed to really get down to the issue.”

In analyzing organizations’ REEI competency, it is important to remember that these scores (and all others) come from a self-assessment. It is possible that some scores are overstated due to participants’ limited knowledge of REEI concepts. In supporting organizations that are

developing this competency, it will be important to engage REEI experts who can provide an informed third-party perspective on each organization’s knowledge, skillsets, and practices.

*Correlations between Competency Areas*

|  | Vision & Impact | Leadership & Talent | Board | Organizational Culture & Operations | Fundraising & Finance | Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Vision & Impact                                  | N/A             |                     |       |                                     |                       |  |
| Leadership & Talent                              | 0.85            | N/A                 |       |                                     |                       |  |
| Board  | 0.74            | 0.79                | N/A   |                                     |                       |  |
| Organizational Culture & Operations              | 0.86            | 0.81                | 0.73  | N/A                                 |                       |  |
| Fundraising & Finance                            | 0.75            | 0.79                | 0.76  | 0.70                                | N/A                   |  |
| Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement | 0.89            | 0.90                | 0.78  | 0.82                                | 0.88                  | N/A  |

We can see in the matrix above that all correlations between competency areas are positive. In fact, all competency areas are *closely* interrelated; all correlation coefficients are higher than 0.7, which we would consider the minimum for a strong correlation). The strongest correlations observed were:

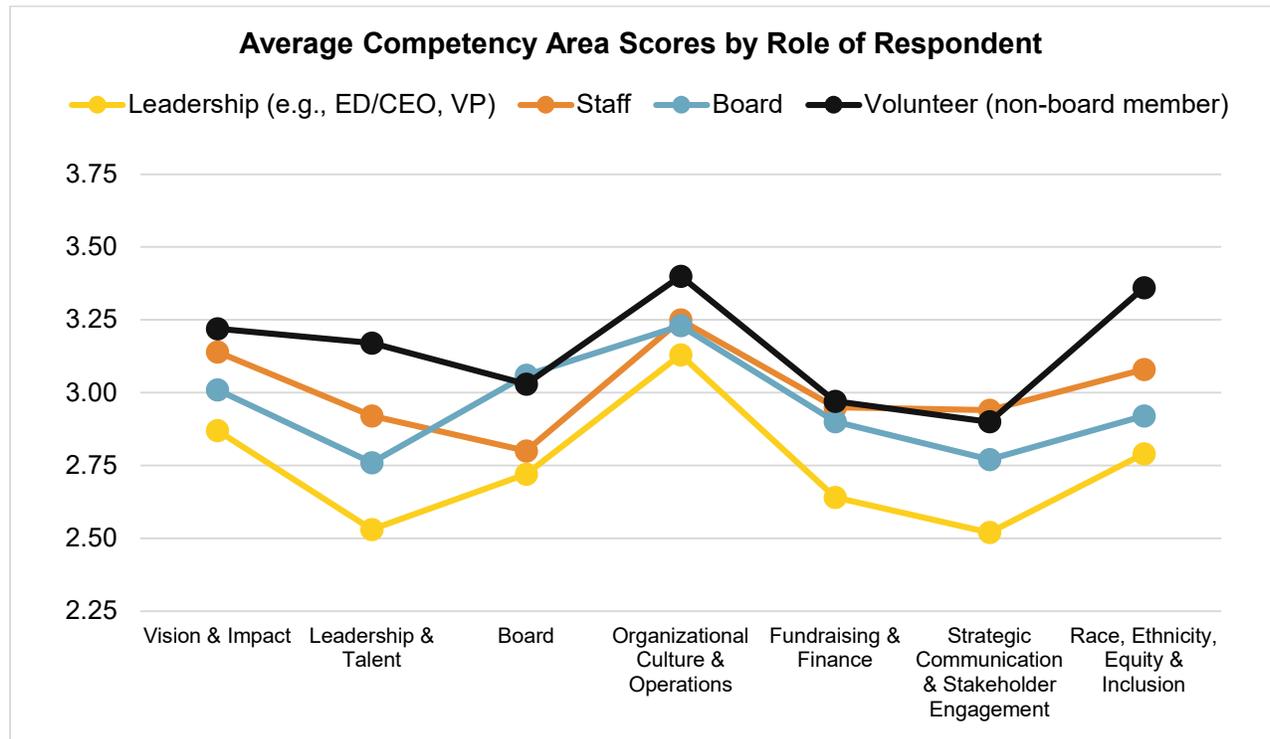
- Strategic Communication with Leadership & Talent, Vision & Impact, and Fundraising & Finance
- Vision & Impact with Organizational Culture & Operations

These findings were echoed in focus groups, where participants also made connections between the competency areas. “Fundraising, communication, and stakeholder engagement feel very interrelated,” one executive director noted while reviewing the overall average scores in each competency area.

These findings indicate that bundled services (i.e., services that address more than one competency area) would likely be worthwhile investments, as organizations needing assistance in one area are also likely to need assistance in the others. The relative strengths of the relationships may be used to determine the optimal combinations.

Please note that this analysis does not offer evidence of causality. For instance, while strength in Strategic Communication is associated with strength in Leadership & Talent, we cannot conclude that improvement in the former will result in improvement in the latter (nor vice versa).

## Differences by Role



On average, in most competency areas, volunteers and staff gave their organizations higher ratings than did board and leadership. This is an unusual finding in that most networks tend to see an opposite result: volunteers and staff, most closely attuned to the organization's day-to-day challenges, typically give lower ratings than do board members and leadership. Possible explanations include:

- Leadership and board members could be going to great lengths to create positive experiences for staff and volunteers, while they themselves are highly attuned to the ways in which the organization could be improved.
- These organizations may be more reliant on volunteers than other nonprofits we have encountered and therefore invest heavily in volunteer cultivation and support. These investments could in turn lead to higher ratings from those volunteers. (One board member mentioned, "It's great that the volunteer line is high since we all rely so much on our volunteers.")
- Since compensation tends not to be an effective lever for attracting and retaining talent, it could be that staff who are retained are highly satisfied with the work for the intangible rewards it offers – PTO, personal fulfillment, etc. – and that this satisfaction is reflected in their ratings.
- A board member attributed the gap to the lack of communication between those on the ground and those providing oversight: "How many agencies have their board engaging with staff regularly? Staff may not know what the board is doing. The real disconnect is that ... they don't intersect very often."
- An executive director pointed out another potential communication gap: siloing of departments within an organization. While a staff member may only be aware of a limited set of challenges facing their department, a board member or executive director would have visibility into the full range of issues affecting the organization and therefore provide a lower rating.

## NEXT STEPS

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This analysis is intended as a starting point for conversation between the Partnership, participating nonprofits, and other nonprofit organizations. Community Wealth Partners looks forward to supporting the Partnership in designing an intervention for the Chautauqua nonprofit community based on the needs identified in this assessment. Based on the findings above, we put forward the following ideas for consideration:

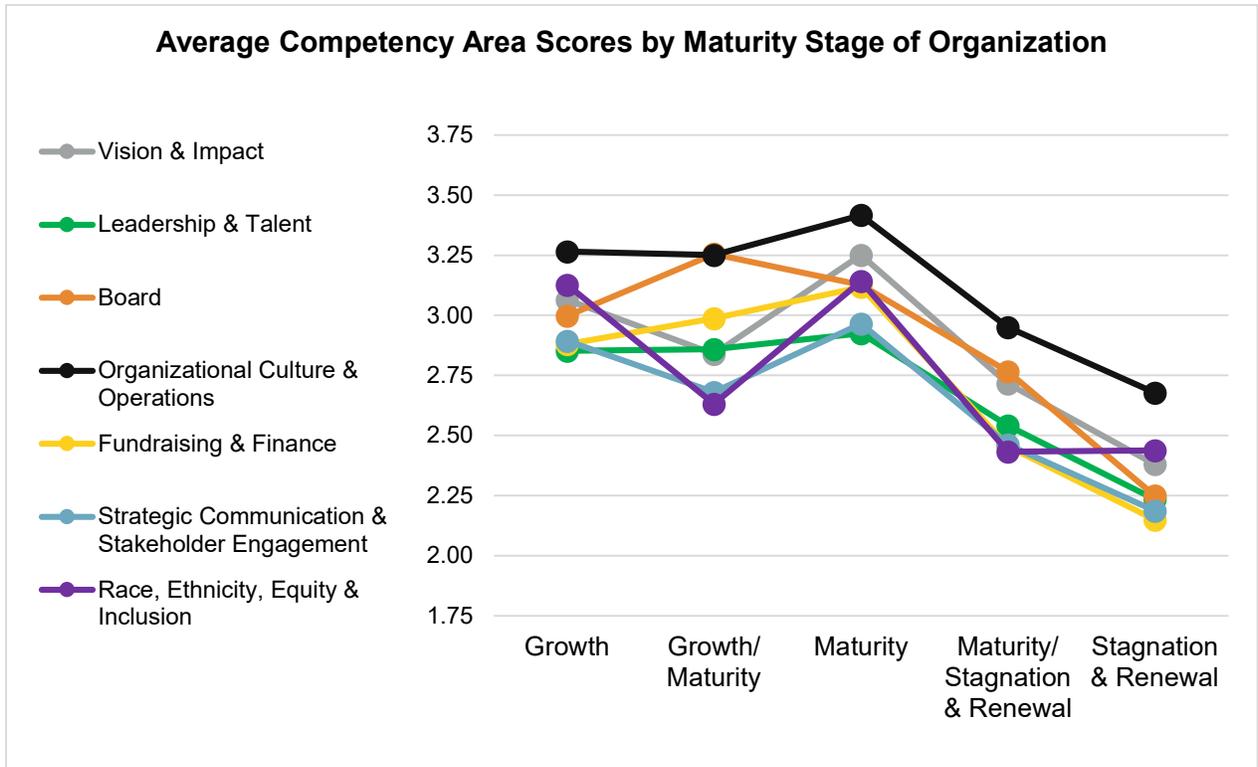
- Hosting regular convenings that allow nonprofits to share knowledge with one another on specific, relevant topics and connect with local, state-level, and national funders (emphasizing diversity in the guest list)
- Coaching and convening new executive directors through their initial transition periods
- Providing commonly needed services that can be shared by multiple organizations (facilities, social media expertise, etc.)
- Identifying and better understanding underserved populations in the county and building nonprofits' capacity to reach them
- Creating staff and board pipelines with an emphasis on increasing the diversity of the pool
- Developing a training program and/or materials to help nonprofits define and communicate board roles and responsibilities
- Building REEI capacity at all levels of organizations
- Combining capacity building services that address strongly correlated competency areas (e.g., Strategic Communication & Stakeholder Engagement and Leadership & Talent)

We look forward to further reflection, ideation, and discussion on these topics.

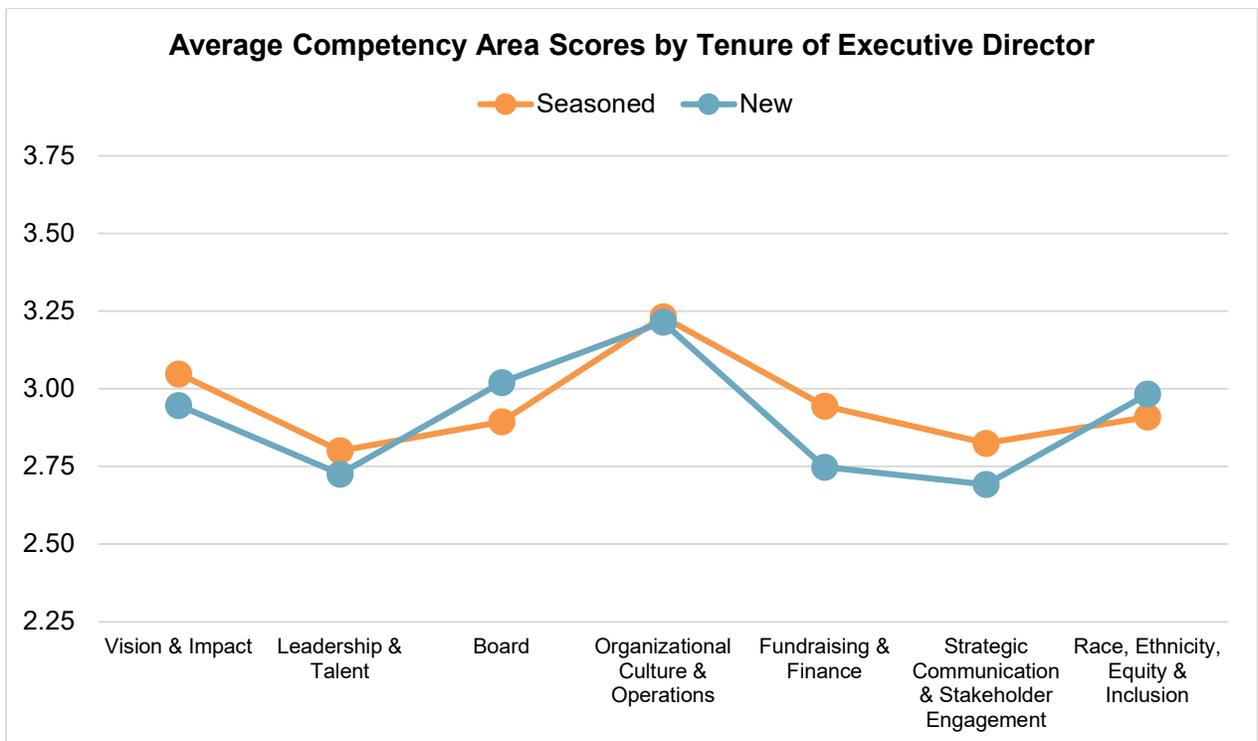
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**APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL SURVEY ANALYSIS**

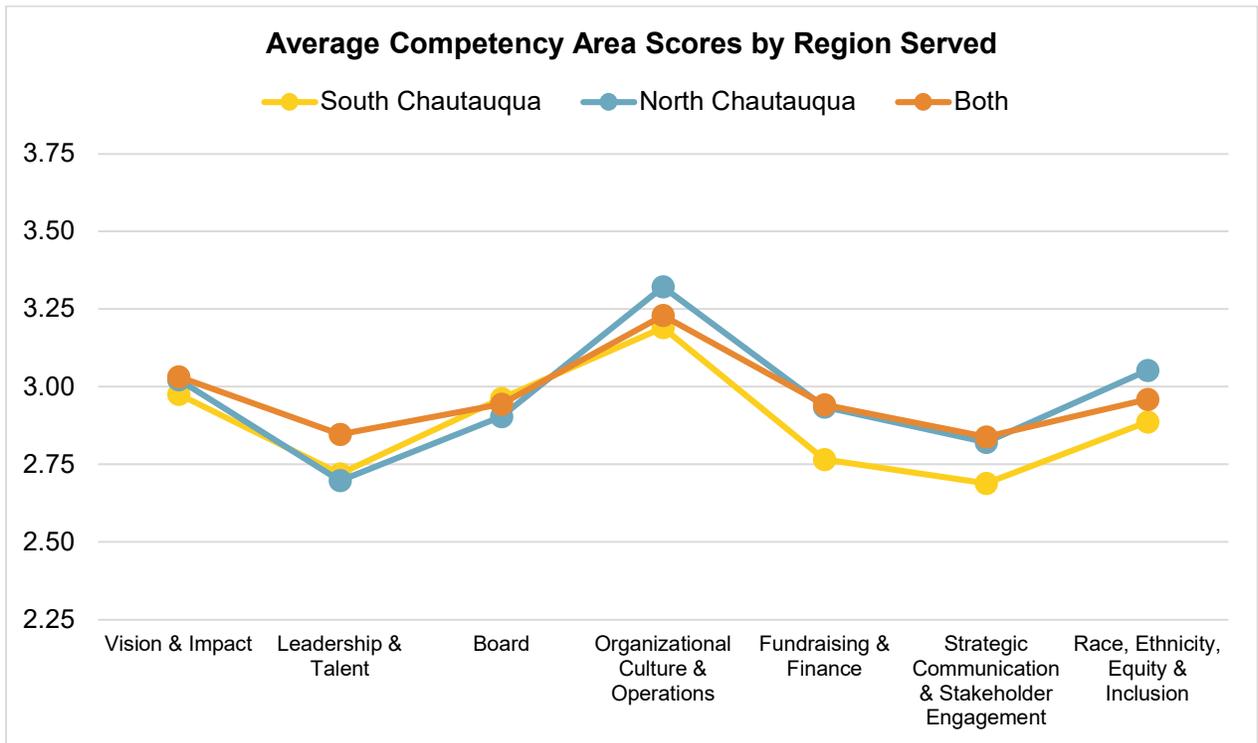
*Differences by Maturity Stage*



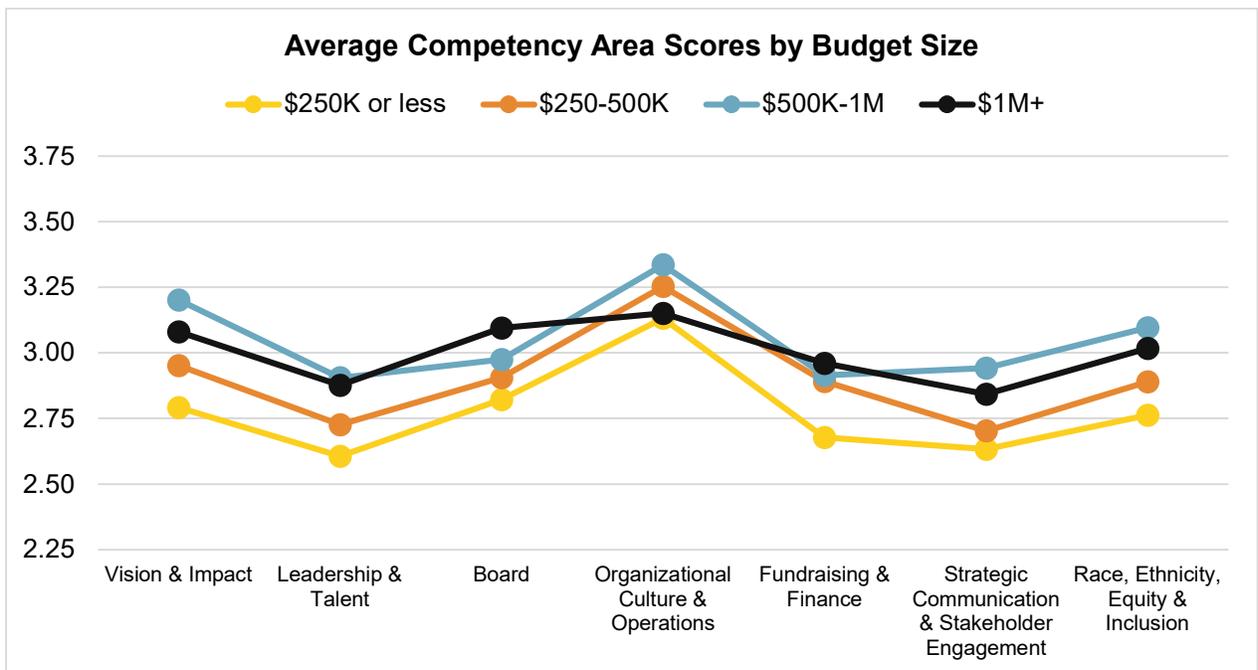
*Differences by Tenure of Executive Director*



*Differences by Region Served*



*Differences by Budget Size*



## APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE *CHAUTAUQUA NONPROFIT CAPACITY PARTNERSHIP*

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The *Chautauqua Nonprofit Capacity Partnership* is a collaborative initiative to support nonprofit leaders and organizations in Chautauqua County. The initiative's goal is to work with nonprofit partners to canvas existing assets, increase engagement and collectively design a strategy to help strengthen organizations across the sector. The Partnership defines "Capacity" as an abstract term that describes a wide range of capabilities, knowledge, and resources that nonprofits need in order to be effective<sup>1</sup>.

The partnership includes representatives from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, United Way of Northern Chautauqua County, United Way of Southern Chautauqua County and Winifred Crawford Dibert Foundation. Additionally, the initiative has been supported by the Gebbie Foundation, Lenna Foundation and the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation.

The group has partnered with Community Wealth Partners, a consulting organization with deep experience in understanding and supporting nonprofit capacity building to help facilitate and administer the nonprofit assessment.

## APPENDIX C: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

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### *Survey*

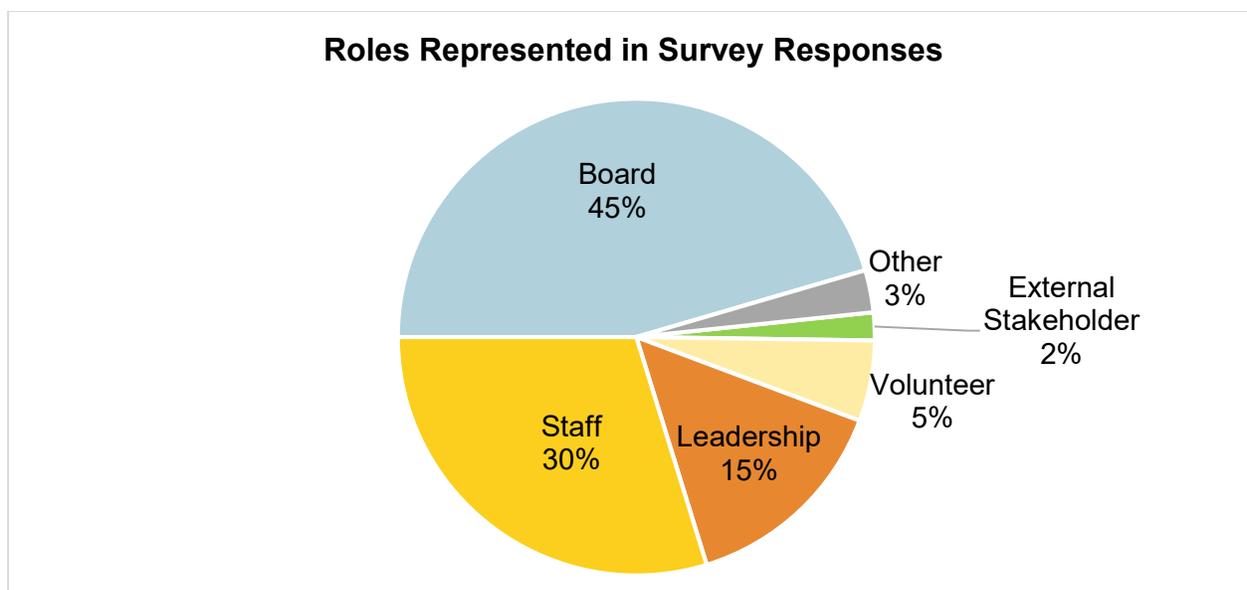
Representatives of nonprofits from across Chautauqua County were invited by members of the Partnership to attend one of two virtual, informational sessions about the capacity assessment, after which they had four weeks to let Community Wealth partners know if they were interested in participating in the assessment. (Recordings of the sessions were also made available to organizations who could not attend the events.) All invited organizations were registered 501(c)3 organizations that provide services to residents in Chautauqua County. Thirty-six nonprofits were ultimately selected to participate based on their interest and the overall resources available for this assessment.

The survey was fielded in October and November of 2019. A total of 420 respondents, representing 36 Chautauqua County nonprofits, completed the survey. (A full list of participating organizations can be found in Appendix A.) Respondents included a combination of leadership, staff, board members, volunteers, and external stakeholders (e.g., partners, funders).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [geofunders.org](http://geofunders.org)

## Roles Represented in Survey Responses



This aggregate report reflects the responses of all organizations with three or more survey respondents. To avoid skewing results toward organizations with stronger survey participation, each organization, rather than each respondent, was weighted equally in the analysis. For instance, an overall average score representing all organizations, an organization with twenty responses and an organization with five responses would carry the same weight.

We also conducted analysis at the organizational level; each participating organization with at least three responses will receive an individual report of their organization's results. (Organizations with fewer than three responses will not receive individual reports due to confidentiality concerns and are not included in this report, as they did not receive enough data to be considered valid.)

### *Focus groups*

We held five focus groups with staff, board members and executive directors from Chautauqua County nonprofits, many of whom also participated in the survey. Questions were designed to help the Partnership better understand the reasons and nuances behind patterns observed in the quantitative survey results. Participants were shown a set of graphs illustrating high-level findings from the survey and asked for their reactions to each, with follow-up questions tailored to their roles.

The two-hour focus groups were conducted in December 2019 via Zoom videoconferencing. Six board members, six staff, five new executive directors (i.e., those with less than two years' experience in their roles), and five seasoned executive directors (with more than two years' experience) participated. To help participants feel comfortable sharing candid feedback, we grouped them by role – board members, staff, or executive directors – and assured them that no comment would be attributed to any individual in this aggregate report. Detailed notes were taken during the focus groups, and the conversations were recorded for Community Wealth Partners' internal reference (not to be shared with the Partnership).

## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPATING NONPROFITS

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- 1891 Fredonia Opera House
- Audubon Community Nature Center
- Boys & Girls Club of Northern Chautauqua County
- Chautauqua Adult Day Services
- Chautauqua Blind Association, Inc.
- Chautauqua County Historical Society
- Chautauqua County Humane Society
- Chautauqua County Rural Ministry
- Chautauqua Hospice & Palliative Care
- Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center
- Chautauqua Striders
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy
- Child Advocacy Program
- Community Connections at Findley Lake, Inc.
- Community Helping Hands Inc.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County
- Court Appointed Special Advocates of Chautauqua County
- Dunkirk-Fredonia Meals on Wheels
- Family Service of the Chautauqua Region
- Fenton History Center
- Historical Society of Dunkirk
- Infinity Visual and Performing Arts, Inc.
- Jamestown Community Learning Council
- Jamestown Renaissance Corporation
- Lily Dale Assembly
- Literacy Volunteers of Chautauqua
- Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown
- Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County
- National Comedy Center
- Prevention Works, Inc.
- Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History
- St. Susan Center
- The Relief Zone Inc.
- The Robert H. Jackson Center
- Winifred Crawford Dibert Boys & Girls Club of Jamestown
- Young Women's Christian Association of Jamestown, NY

## APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY STAGES<sup>2</sup>

| Stage  | Nonprofits self-identifying in this stage | Opportunities   | Obstacles   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Invention:</b><br><i>Is the dream feasible?</i>                         | 0   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Energy for the dream</li> <li>• Excitement to join</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to forming</li> <li>• Lack of funding/expertise</li> <li>• No outside support</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Incubation:</b><br><i>How do we get started?</i>                        | 0   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excitement of funders</li> <li>• Charismatic leader</li> <li>• People wanting to belong</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of formalizing</li> <li>• Sustaining initial enthusiasm</li> <li>• Focusing the energy/founder</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Growth:</b><br><i>How can we build this to be viable?</i>               | 7   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of accomplishment</li> <li>• New faces, 'arms and legs'</li> <li>• Diversification in all areas of the organization</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of systems &amp; accountability</li> <li>• Overwhelmed with change</li> <li>• Change may alienate funders, clients, staff, &amp; board</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Growth/Maturity</b>   | 3   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejuvenation for the founders</li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>Maturity:</b><br><i>How do we ensure sustainability?</i>                | 18  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling secure</li> <li>• Adequate resources</li> <li>• New staff/board – fresh ideas</li> <li>• Ability to try something new</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of or too much control</li> <li>• Lack of risk taking</li> <li>• Board &amp; staff too operational</li> <li>• Unable to transition into a governance board</li> <li>• Conflict between old &amp; new</li> </ul> |
| <b>Maturity/Stagnation &amp; Renewal</b>                                   | 2   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisdom from past</li> <li>• Strategic partnership opportunities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to change</li> <li>• Inability to address key challenges</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Stagnation &amp; Renewal:</b><br><i>How, if possible, can we renew?</i> | 6   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chance to take risks again and think 'out-of-the-box'</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining excitement</li> <li>• Isolation of the agency</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Decline &amp; Shut-Down:</b><br><i>Should we close?</i>                 | 0   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to complete turnaround</li> <li>• Graceful 'sunset' or merger</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial crises</li> <li>• Inappropriate leadership</li> <li>• Loss of staff &amp; volunteers</li> <li>• Lack of any passion</li> </ul>   |

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: The 5 Life Stages of Nonprofits, Judith Sharken Simon, 2002 and The Conservation Company, 1997