



Caring for Colorado Statewide Philanthropy Program Evaluation DATA PORTFOLIO

August 2021



What is in the Data Portfolio



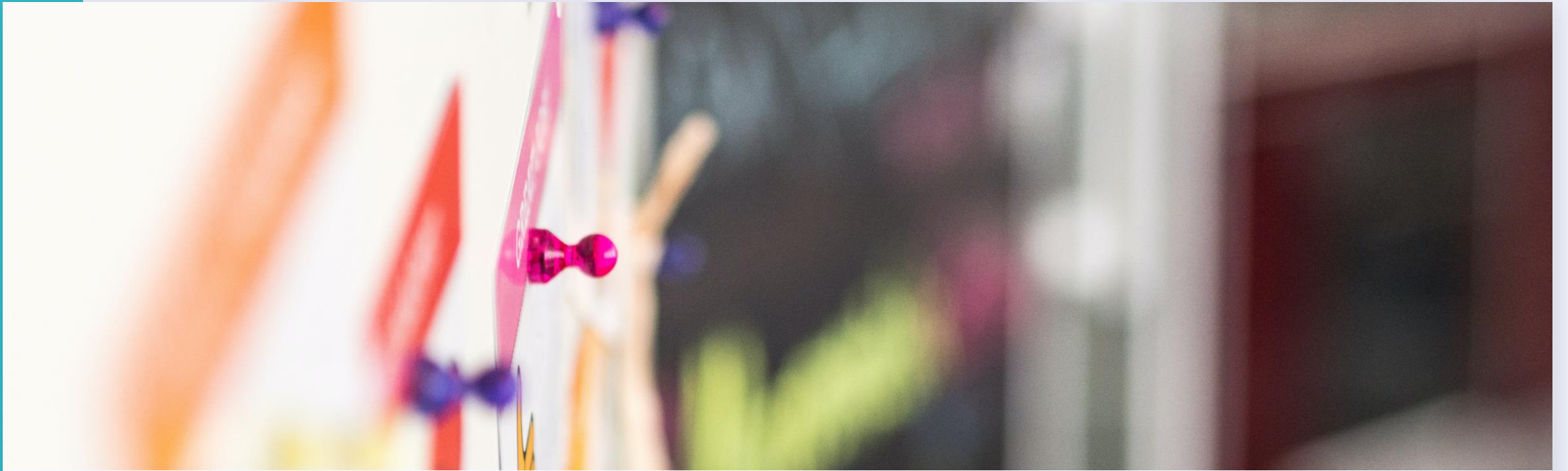
Project background and context



Findings summary and top recommendations



Comprehensive evaluation findings by learning question



PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Caring for Colorado's Statewide Philanthropy Program Evaluation

Phase 1: Grounding the Evaluation



Theory of Change and Learning Agenda Development



Evaluation Plan Formation

Phase 2: Data Collection, Analysis, and Synthesis



Survey, Interviews, and Focus Groups with Grantees

Phase 3: Data to Action

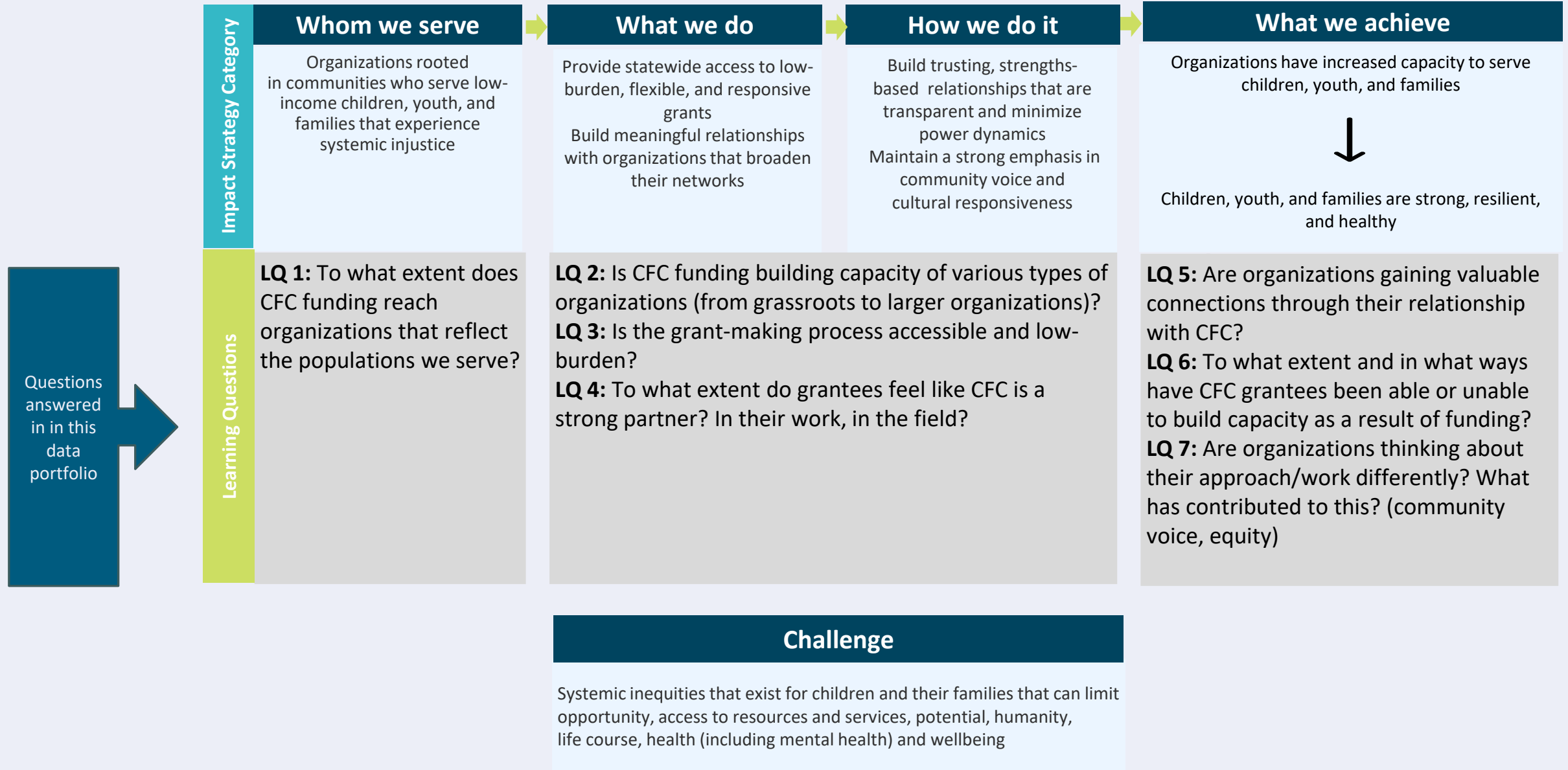


Data Use Sessions



Stakeholder Communication

Statewide Philanthropy Program Evaluation: Learning Agenda



Questions answered in this data portfolio

Impact Strategy Category

Learning Questions

Challenge

Systemic inequities that exist for children and their families that can limit opportunity, access to resources and services, potential, humanity, life course, health (including mental health) and wellbeing

Context: Sources of Data



CFC Staff Focus Group Discussion

Participants: CFC statewide grantmaking team (n = 4)

Timeframe: April



Satisfaction Survey

Participants: Applicants from fiscal years '20 and '21 (n = 68)
Grantees from fiscal years '18, '19, '20 (n = 71)

Timeframe: March



Grantee Focus Group Discussions / Interviews

Participants: Grantees from fiscal years '18, '19, '20 (n = 16)

Timeframe: May – June



Grantee Demographic Survey

Participants: Grantees from fiscal years '20 and '21 (n = 77)

Timeframe: May – June

Context: Definitions



Grassroots and non-grassroots organizations:

Budget size was the primary factor used to distinguish a grassroots organization from a non-grassroots organization. Generally, organizations with a budget **under \$1M** were classified as grassroots.



Urban and rural organizations:

Organizations located **outside of the Front Range** were classified as rural. All others were considered to be urban organizations.



FINDINGS SUMMARY AND TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings Summary: Overview of the Portfolio

Portfolio Demographics

- **Representation:** Staff and leadership are mostly representative of the populations they serve. Generally, Boards of Directors were at least **somewhat representative** of communities served.
- **Ethnicity and race:** Over half of CFC grantees employ a large proportion of **Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin** staff. Further, close to **half of CFC grantees reported predominantly white staff**, but most organizations reported modest representation of other racial groups.
- **Gender:** Most organizations' staff identify as **cis female**. Agender, gender fluid, and transgender identities were the least represented.
- **Ability:** The most prevalent challenge faced by grantee staff were **long-term mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression**.

Funding Use

- Over three-quarters of the CFC portfolio was dedicated to organizations with **budgets under \$5M**, and over half of grantees served in **urban settings**.
- **Most small to mid-sized organizations received general operating grants**, while larger nonprofits received project/program specific funding.
- Grantees used funding in a variety of ways, with about **40 percent dedicating funds to capacity building**. Both grassroots and non-grassroots organizations built capacity for **growing/scaling programs**, and non-grassroots organizations also used funding to **fill budget gaps**.

Findings Summary: Grantmaking process

Grant Application

- Most grantees and applicants found the new application to be low-burden: **accessible, simple to understand, and feasible to complete on time.**
- Grantees noted that additional improvements could further reduce burden: **aligning questions with other grant applications, finding simpler ways to tell their story (e.g. video), and eliminating character limits.**

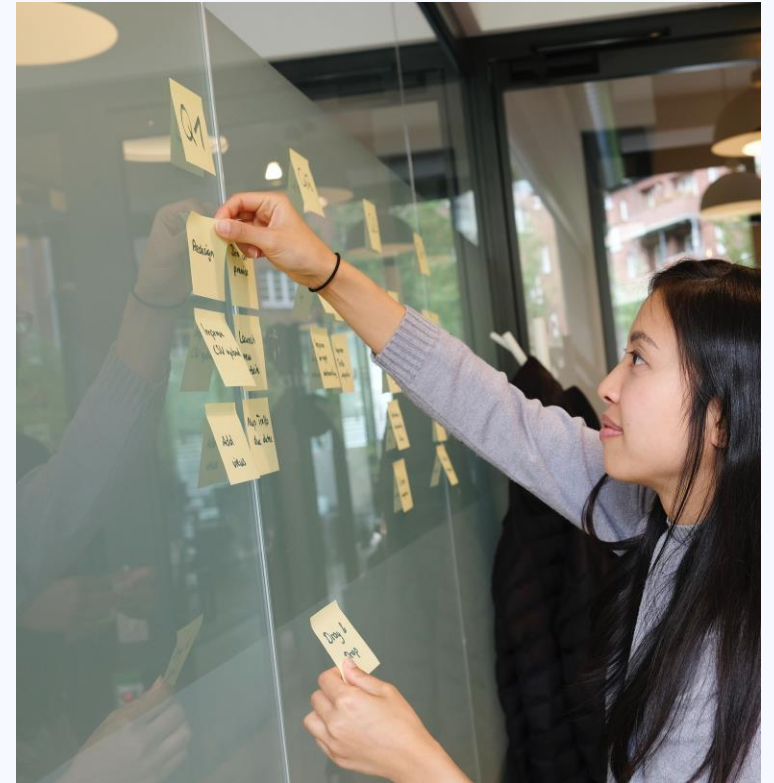
Partnership

- Grantees feel a **strong sense of partnership** with CFC.
- Over 80 percent of grantee survey respondents reported feeling **comfortable sharing organizational challenges** and turning to CFC for support. They also believed CFC worked to **intentionally build relationships with grantees.**
- Grantees appreciated CFC's **recognition of their expertise and knowledge** of the field but were less certain about CFC's presence in the community.
- Grantees offered **mixed responses** to whether or not they are gaining valuable connections through their relationship with CFC.

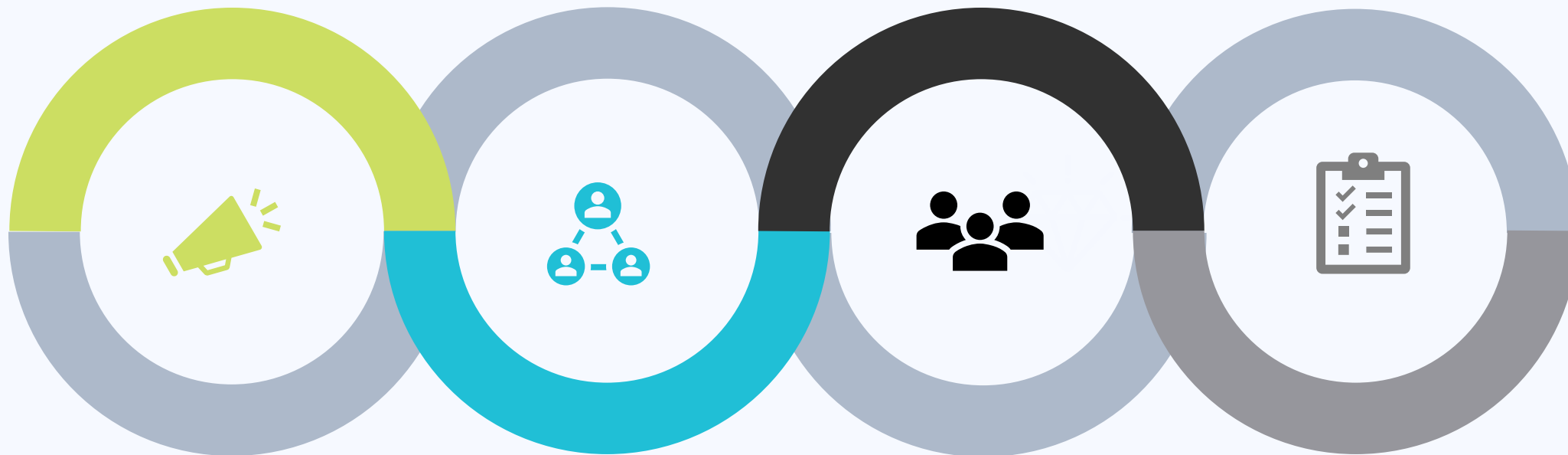
Influence

- Grantees **do not feel that CFC is influencing their approach** to a great extent, but CFC has helped several grantees to think about how to incorporate community voice and collaboration/partnerships into their work.

Recommendations for moving forward with the **Statewide Philanthropy Program**



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATEWIDE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM



Advocate

For organizations by understanding their needs.

Convene

Like-minded organizations to facilitate sharing of ideas.

Collaborate

Across the funding community to create greater alignment in funding areas and priorities.

Optimize

Funding structure to allow for accessible, high-value, and high-impact grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATEWIDE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM



Advocate

For organizations by
understanding their needs.

Continue to give organizations the opportunity to share their perspectives and voice.

Hear what they have to say and use your influence to be a sounding board across the foundation community.

Examples might include:

- ✓ Conduct regular, on-going satisfaction surveys with grantees
- ✓ Widely disseminate learnings from this and other evaluation processes
- ✓ Demonstrate ways that you are adapting your practice according to grantees' needs

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATEWIDE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM



Convene

Like-minded organizations to facilitate sharing of ideas.

Bring organizations together in an intentional manner that will provide the space for organic collaboration and dialogue.

Examples might include:

- ✓ Holding issue-based convenings (virtual or in person) with moderate facilitation to allow organizations to learn about each other's work
- ✓ Connecting similar organizations to one another without an expectation of action from either organization

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATEWIDE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM



Collaborate

Across the funding community to create greater alignment in funding areas and priorities.

Work with other funders to simplify the grantmaking process for nonprofits. Collaborate to create similar processes (as appropriate) that will allow for more accessible applications for nonprofits.

Examples might include:

- ✓ Collaborating with 1-2 health-related funding entities to craft similar grant questions
- ✓ Exploring the grantmaking processes of similar funding entities to find areas of overlap
- ✓ Working with entities across the state to inform funding decisions

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATEWIDE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM



Optimize

Funding structure to allow for accessible, high-value, and high-impact grants.


Continue efforts to simplify the grantmaking process. Allow organizations to demonstrate their impact in a way that is meaningful to them.

Examples might include:


- ✓ Allowing organizations to submit an impact story in a flexible format (written story, video, participant artwork, etc.) that gives them the opportunity to express their work
- ✓ Maintaining the two-step process
- ✓ Maintaining the funding flexibility that was introduced during COVID



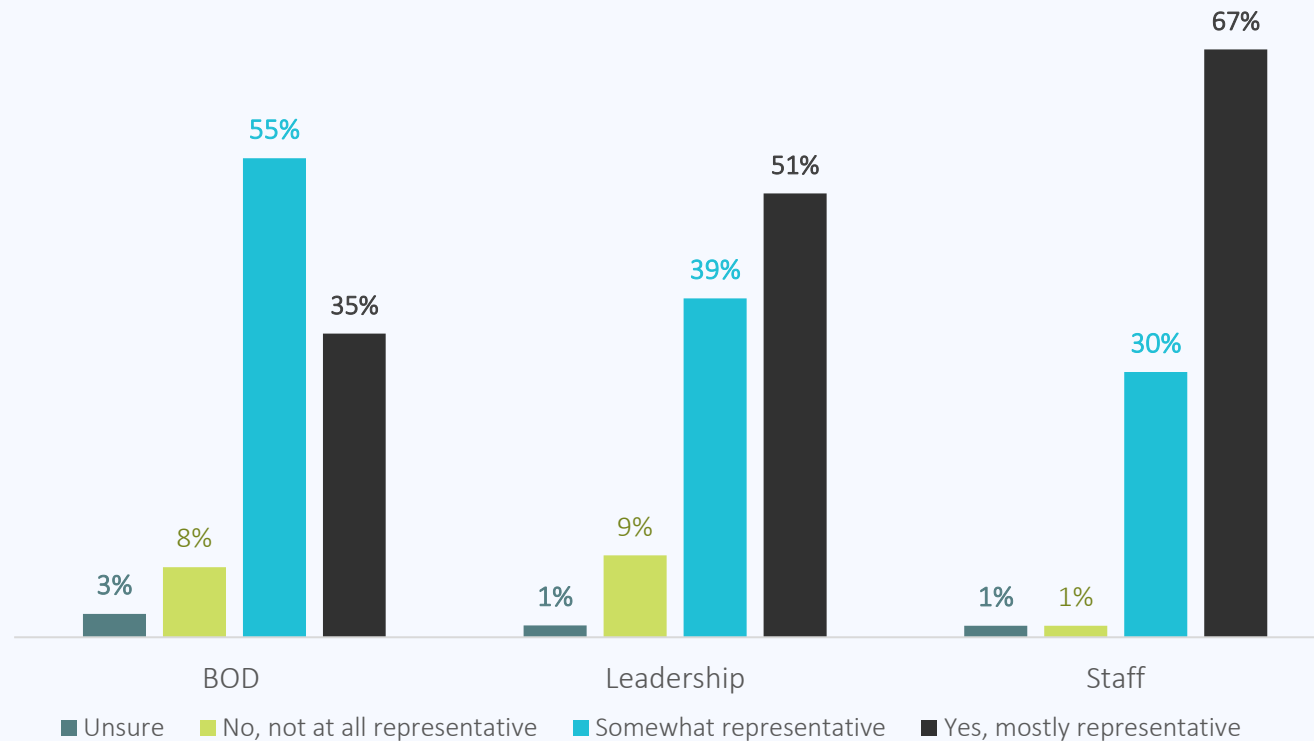
COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION FINDINGS BY LEARNING QUESTION



Learning Question 1:
To what extent does CFC funding reach organizations that reflect the populations we serve?

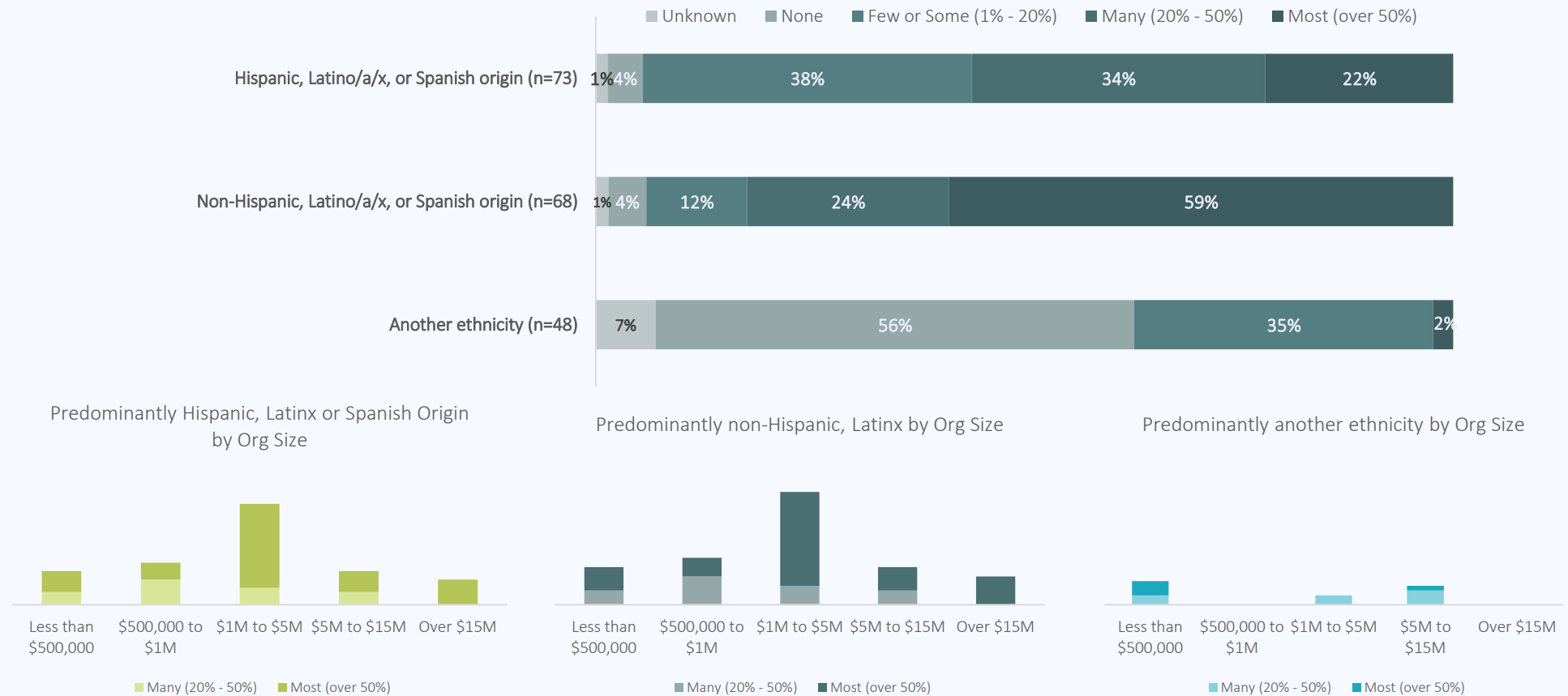


A majority organizations reported that **staff and leadership are mostly representative** of the populations they serve. Generally, Boards of Directors were seen as at least somewhat representative of the communities served.



Source: CFC Grantee Demographics Survey, May-June 2021; n=77

Just **over half** of CFC grantee organizations are home to a large proportion of staff who identify as **Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin**. These organizations tend to be medium-sized with budgets \$1M-\$5M.

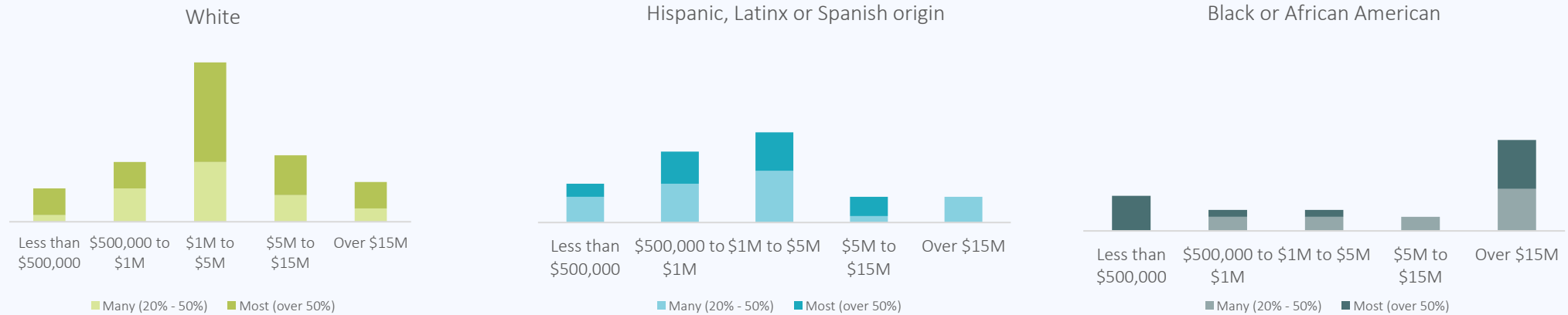


Source: CFC Grantee Demographics Survey, May-June 2021; n=77

Close to half of CFC grantees reported predominantly white staff, but most organizations reported modest representation of other racial groups.

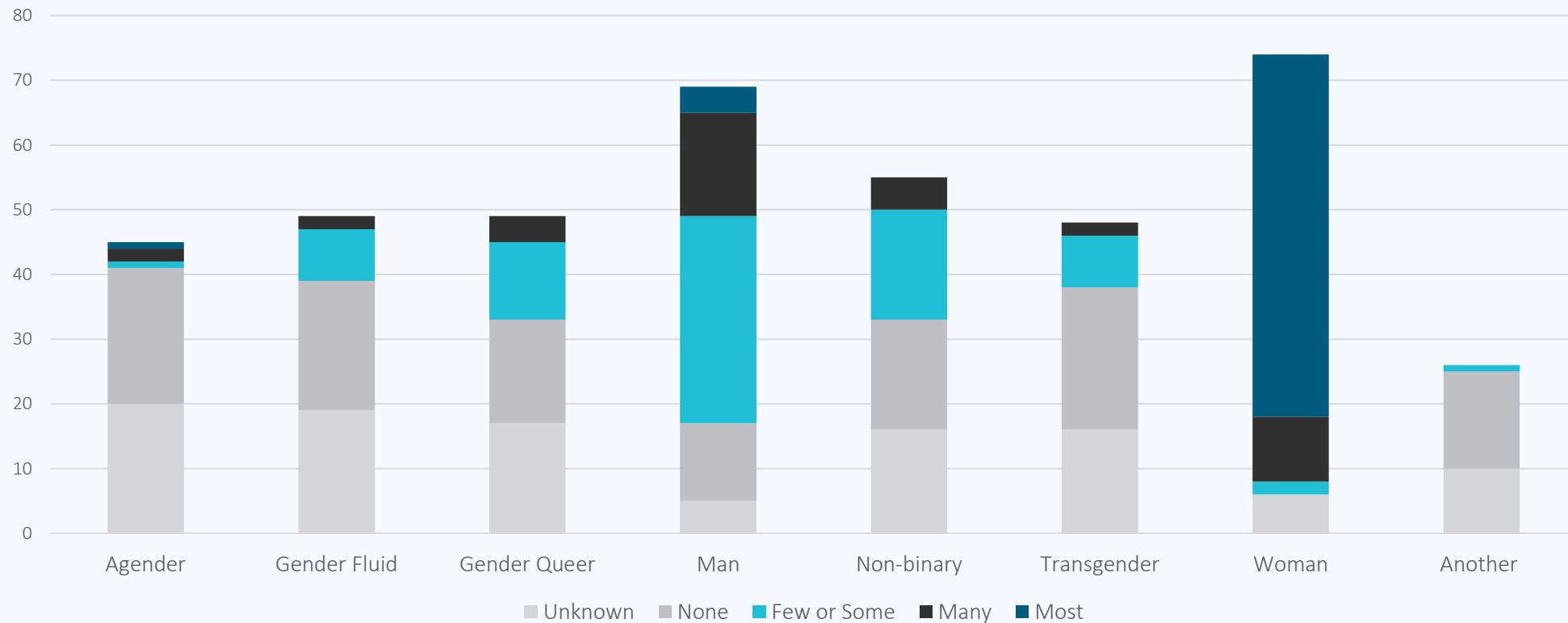
	American Indian or AK Native (n=64)	Asian (n=62)	Black or African American (n=68)	Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin (n=75)	Middle Eastern and North African (n=61)	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n=59)	White (n=70)	Another Race (n=47)
Unknown	6%	44%	4%	1%	11%	10%	4%	6%
None	48%	5%	28%	7%	62%	71%	3%	51%
Few or Some	43%	50%	49%	40%	25%	19%	16%	43%
Many	2%	2%	9%	31%	2%	0%	30%	0%
Most	2%	0%	10%	21%	0%	0%	47%	0%

SIZE OF ORGANIZATION BY PREDOMINANT STAFF RACE



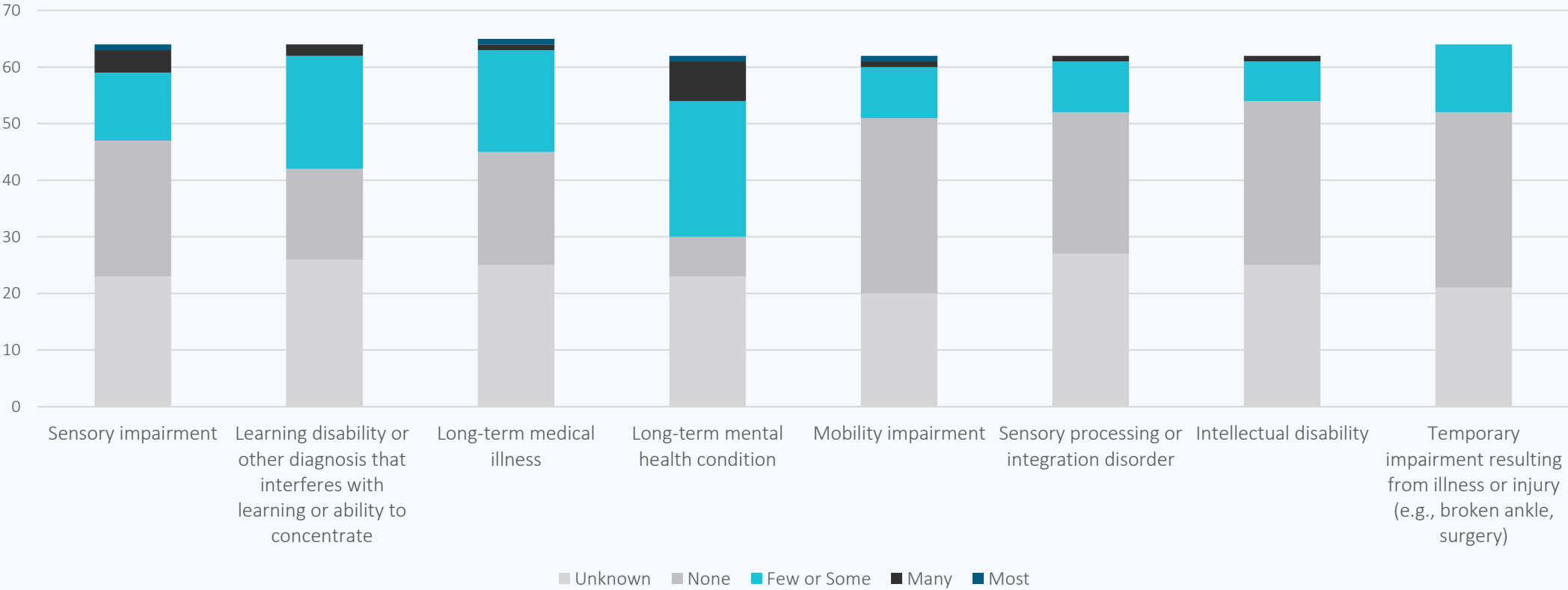
- The sole organization with predominantly Middle Eastern and North African staff had a \$1M to \$5M budget.
- The sole organization with Asian staff also had a \$1M to \$5M budget.
- No organizations had more than 20% of staff who identify as another race.

Most organizations are home to staff who identify as cis female. A small number of organizations reported representation from gender identities other than cis female.




Source: CFC Grantee Demographics Survey, May-June 2021; n=77


Grantee organizations employ staff with myriad abilities. The most prevalent challenge faced by grantee staff were **long-term mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression.**



Source: CFC Grantee Demographics Survey, May-June 2021; n=77

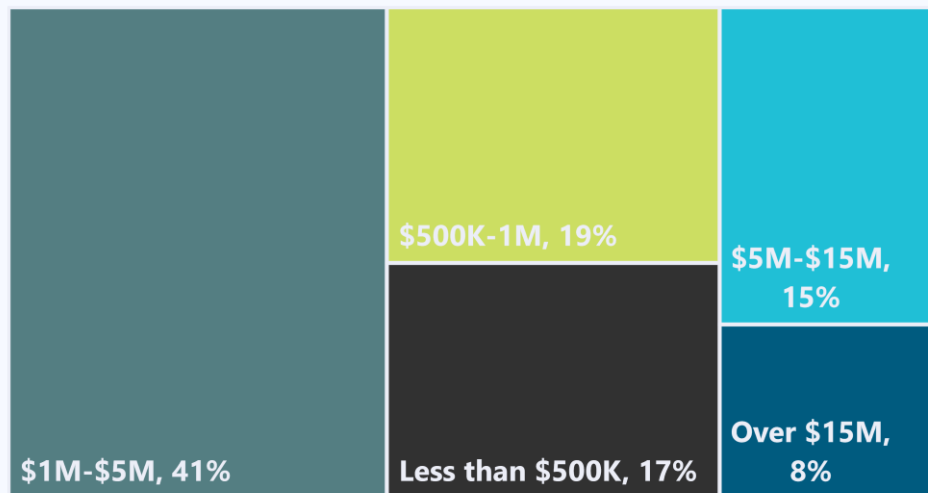


Learning Question 2:
Is CFC funding building capacity of
various types of organizations
(from grassroots to larger
organizations)?

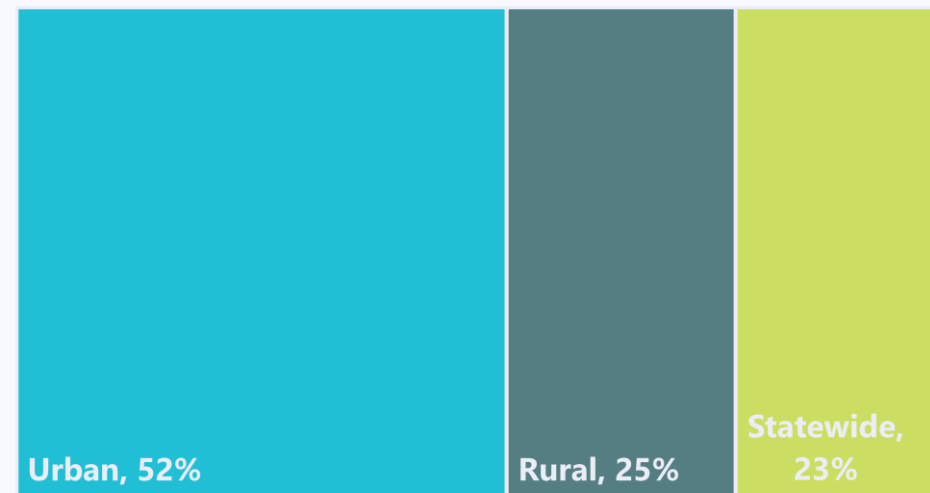


Over three-quarters of the CFC portfolio was dedicated to organizations with **budgets under \$5M**, and over half of grantees served in **urban settings**.

Grantees by size

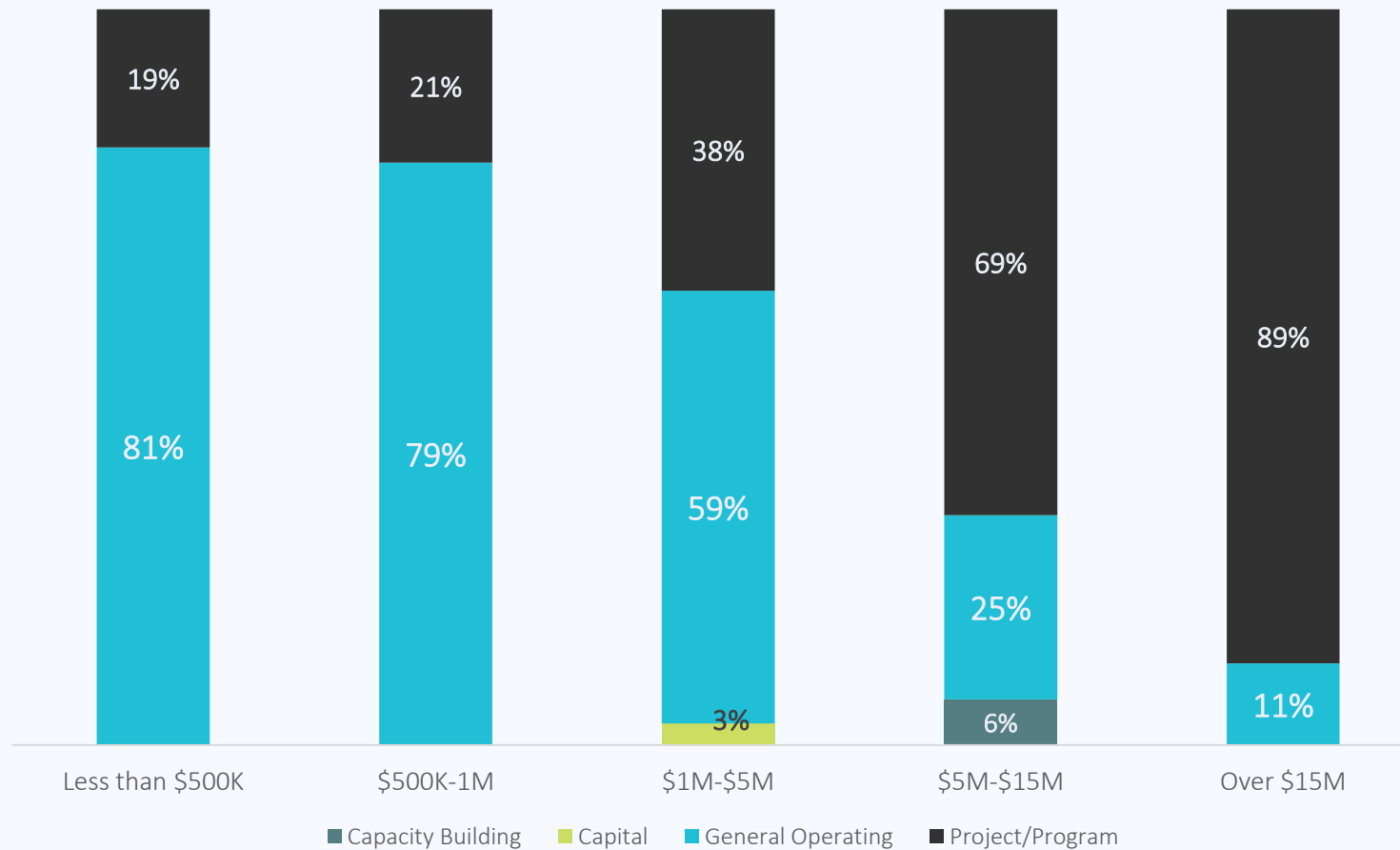


Grantees by Geographic Setting



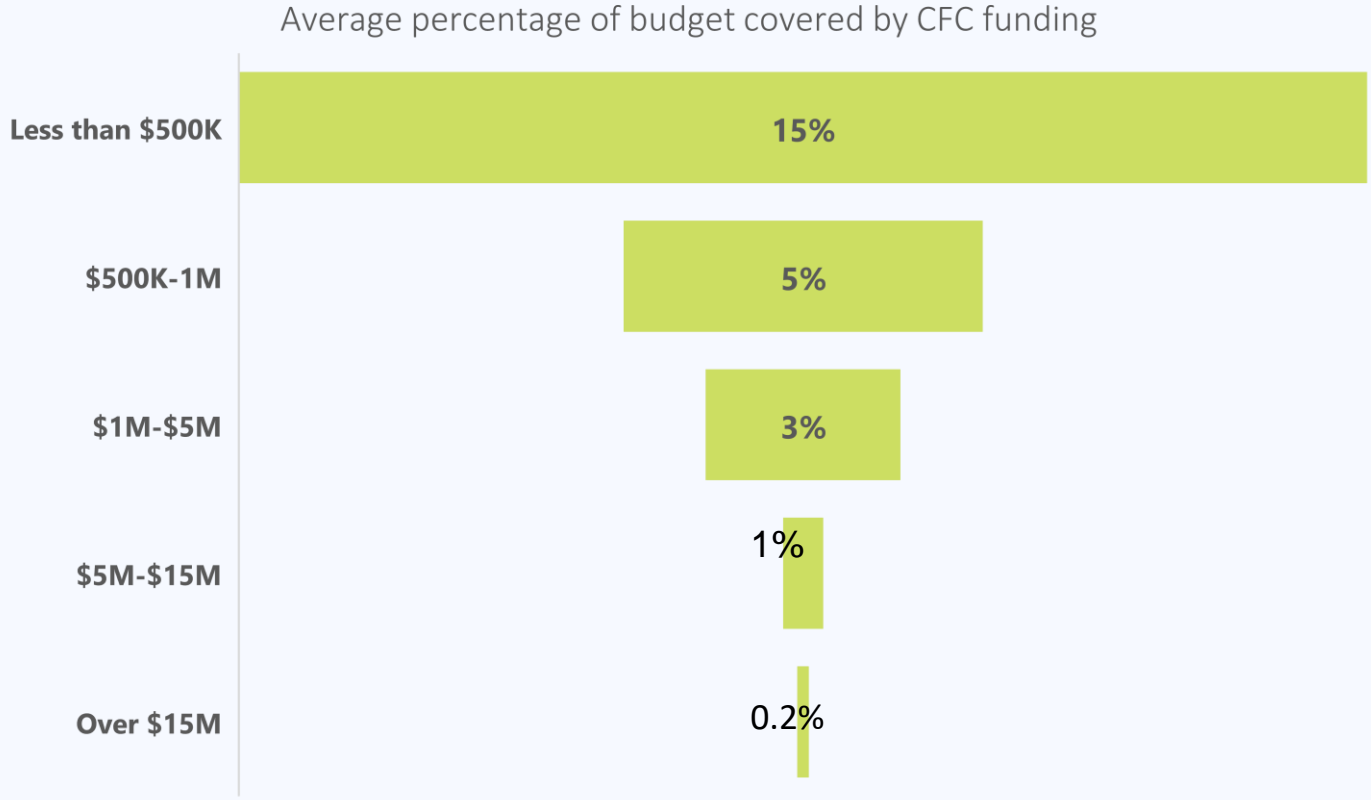
Source: CFC Fluxx database, 2019-2021 grantees; n=204

Most small to mid-sized organizations received general operating grants, while larger nonprofits received project/program specific funding.



Source: CFC Fluxx database, 2019-2021 grantees; n=204

CFC funding accounted for a higher proportion of overall budget for organizations under \$1M.



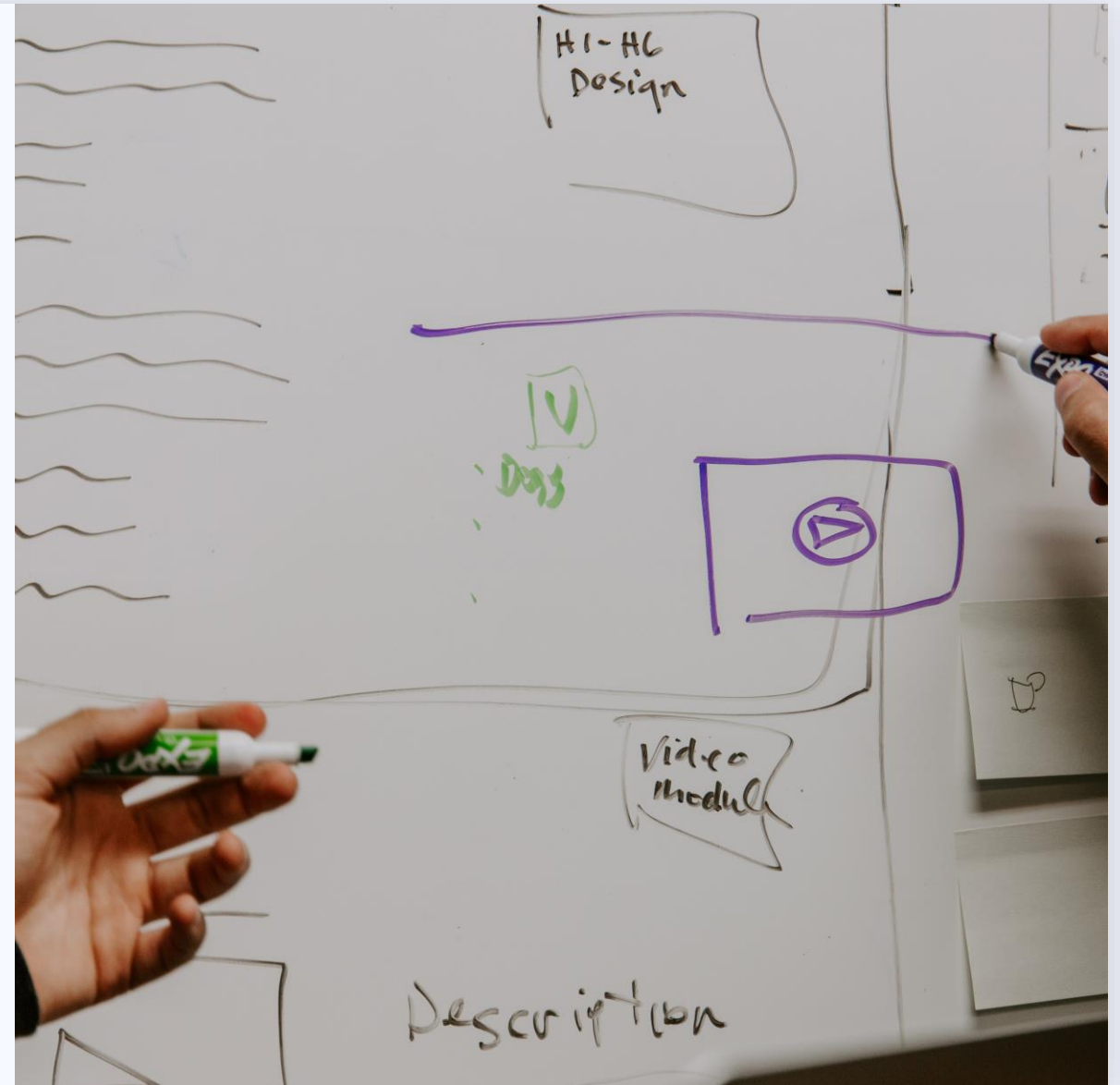
Source: CFC Fluxx database, 2019-2021 grantees; n=204

Learning Question 3:
Is the grant-making process
accessible and low-burden?

CFC Staff are Dedicated to Continuously Improving the Grant Process

CFC staff mentioned that they are consistently **making changes** to the grant process in order to make it simpler for grantees even if these changes sometimes **increase the grant review burden for themselves** (by increasing the number of applications received, for example).

Source: CFC Staff Focus Group Discussions; n = 4



The Majority of Organizations State that CFC's Application is Low-Burden

Non-grassroots and **grassroots** organizations report that the responsive grantmaking application process is...

- ✓ Simple and easy to complete
- ✓ Accessible given their current staff capacity

Information provided along with the application (website, webinars) was reported as being **helpful and useful**

Grantees especially appreciated...

- ✓ The two-step process
- ✓ The budgeting tool/narrative
- ✓ The feedback on their applications

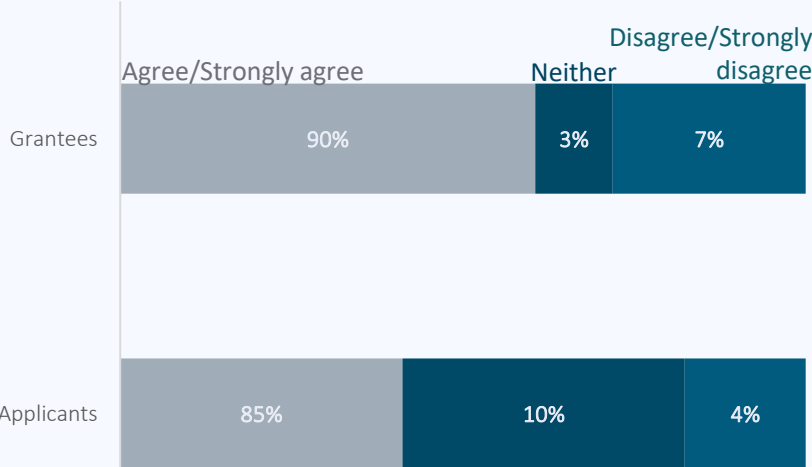
"They aren't asking anything out of the ordinary."
-Urban Grassroots Org

"It was easy to maneuver."
-Urban Non-Grassroots Org

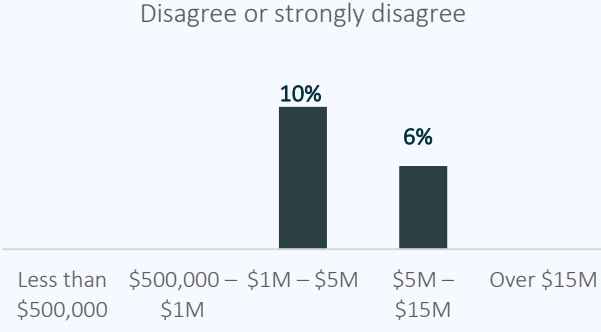
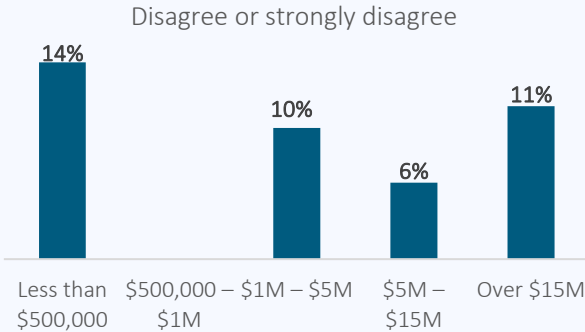
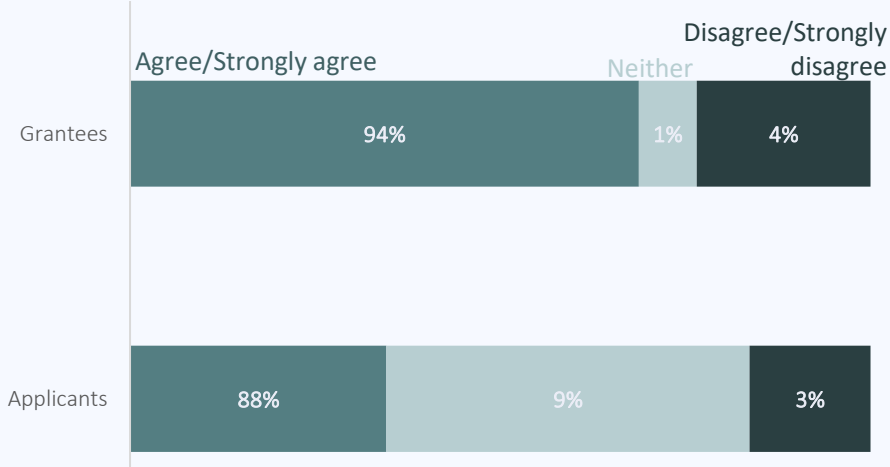
"They just wanted enough [financial information] to make a decision, enough to hold us accountable, and not so much in the weeds."
-Urban Grassroots Org

Most organizations found CFC's application to be low-burden.

I was able to complete the application on time.



The application was simple to understand.



Sources: CFC Grantee and Applicant Satisfaction Surveys, March 2021; applicant n=68, grantee n = 71

CFC Staff Feedback Mirrors Grantee Feedback Regarding the Two-Step Process

CFC staff appreciate that the two-step process is...

- ✓ **More accessible** to a wider variety of organizations
- ✓ Is **less time-consuming** to complete (especially the initial letter of intent)
- ✓ Is **more fair** to organizations who may not receive funding

“Telling someone ‘no’ after they’ve completed a page or two is very different from telling someone ‘no’ after they’ve completed six pages and a bunch of financial documentation.” –CFC Staff

“Even if it creates additional staff burden during the initial review, it’s well worth it.”
–CFC Staff

Grantees Offer Opportunities for Further Improving the Application Process

Grantees agreed that aligning as many questions as possible with other grant applications would allow for a **simpler and more efficient application.**

Grassroots organizations said they would like funders to...

- ✓ Find simple ways for them to tell their stories (perhaps through the use of video)

Non-grassroots organizations specifically mentioned that they would like funders to...

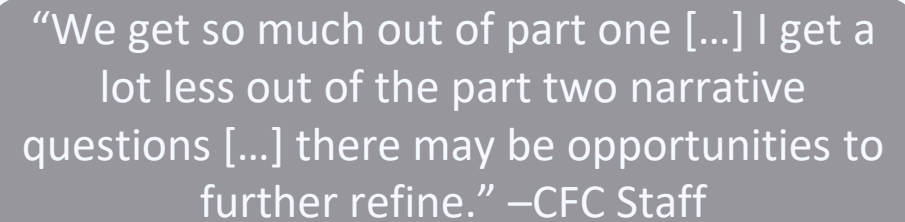
- ✓ Eliminate character limits

"Sometimes I spend more time dealing with character limits than I do writing the actual grant application."
-Urban Non-Grassroots Org

CFC Staff Agree that There are Areas for Continued Improvement

During an initial review of grantee and applicant feedback on the grantmaking process, survey respondents indicated that they perceived **some redundancies** between part one and part two of the application process.

CFC staff agreed that this was an area that could be **refined**.



“We get so much out of part one [...] I get a lot less out of the part two narrative questions [...] there may be opportunities to further refine.” –CFC Staff

Promising Practices From Other Grantmakers Allow for Additional Funding Streams

Grantees were asked to name some **promising practices** that they have observed/experienced from other funders.

Individuals from **non-grassroots** organizations mentioned...

- ✓ More **flexible funding** categories to be able to apply for grants for capital improvements or other needs that do not “fit in the box” of a funder’s usual priorities
- ✓ More **trust-based funding** that is rooted in strong relationships and does not require repeated, formal applications

Individuals from grassroots organizations mentioned...

- ✓ Establishing a **strong connection or presence** in communities
- ✓ Utilizing **entities across the state** or existing nonprofit peer groups to provide nominations/recommendations for funding

Promising Practices From Other Grantmakers Allow for Additional Funding Streams

On trust-based funding:

“[Our funder calls us at the beginning of the year to ask] ‘What are you working on? What do you need?’ [then, instead of a new proposal they say] ‘Send us something you already have.’” -Urban Non-Grassroots Org

On establishing a strong community presence:

“Colorado Health Foundation is selecting certain communities and the program officer is spending 50% of their time there.” -Rural Grassroots Org

On utilization of regional councils:

“El Pomar Foundation has regional councils [...] local leaders advise the Foundation on applications and funding.” -Rural Grassroots Org

Grantees Would Like to See CFC Use its Position to Influence Others

Grantees mentioned that they would like CFC to **convene grantees more often** to learn from each other.

Non-grassroots grantees mentioned that would like to see CFC **advocate to other funders to fund statewide** to increase the access to funding for rural organizations.

Source: Grantee Focus Group Discussions/Interviews; n = 16



If Given a Magic Wand to Change Anything About the Grantmaking Process...

Grantees mentioned that they would...

- ✓ Create more opportunities for **multi-year funding**
- ✓ Create more opportunities for **general operating support**
- ✓ Request that funders continue to ask for **feedback from grantees** (as CFC is doing in this process)
- ✓ Find simpler ways for grantees to **tell their stories** and receive funding
- ✓ Provide **larger grants**

"I really appreciate it when foundations like CFC, and a handful of others, are sincere about soliciting feedback from the partners that they work with in the community." -Rural Grassroots Org

"Projects aren't just one year. One year of funding is not enough to get this project up and off the ground." -Urban Non-Grassroots Org

If Given a Magic Wand to Change Anything About the Grantmaking Process...*

Individuals from **grassroots** organizations mentioned that they would...

- ✓ Create **more training or peer connection** opportunities for Executive Directors
- ✓ Ask foundations to **collaborate** with each other
- ✓ Ask foundations to **fund evaluation** for grantees
- ✓ Ask foundations to **take greater risks** on organizations that have not been well-supported in the past

While an individual from a **non-grassroots** grantee stated they would...

- ✓ Require simpler and **less-burdensome evaluation/reporting** because nonprofits generally do not have robust evaluation support

"Hey foundations, don't recreate the wheel, collaborate with one another."
-Urban Grassroots Org

"Most of us are functioning on our own [...] there's not much of a bench when it comes to HR, or Accounting issues, or all the other things that we get to deal with as Executive Directors on our own, in our basements, or wherever we are these days." -Urban Grassroots Org

Source: Grantee Focus Group Discussions/Interviews; n = 16

*The items listed on this slide were suggestions that were raised once—they are not themes across the multiple focus group discussions

Learning Question 4:
To what extent do grantees feel like CFC is a strong partner? In their work, in the field?

Grantees Feel a Strong Sense of Partnership with CFC

Grantees used the following words to describe their relationship with CFC:

Non-Grassroots

- Flexible
- Responsive
- Supportive
- Committed
- Trusting
- Open, communicative
- Collaborative
- Alignment with values

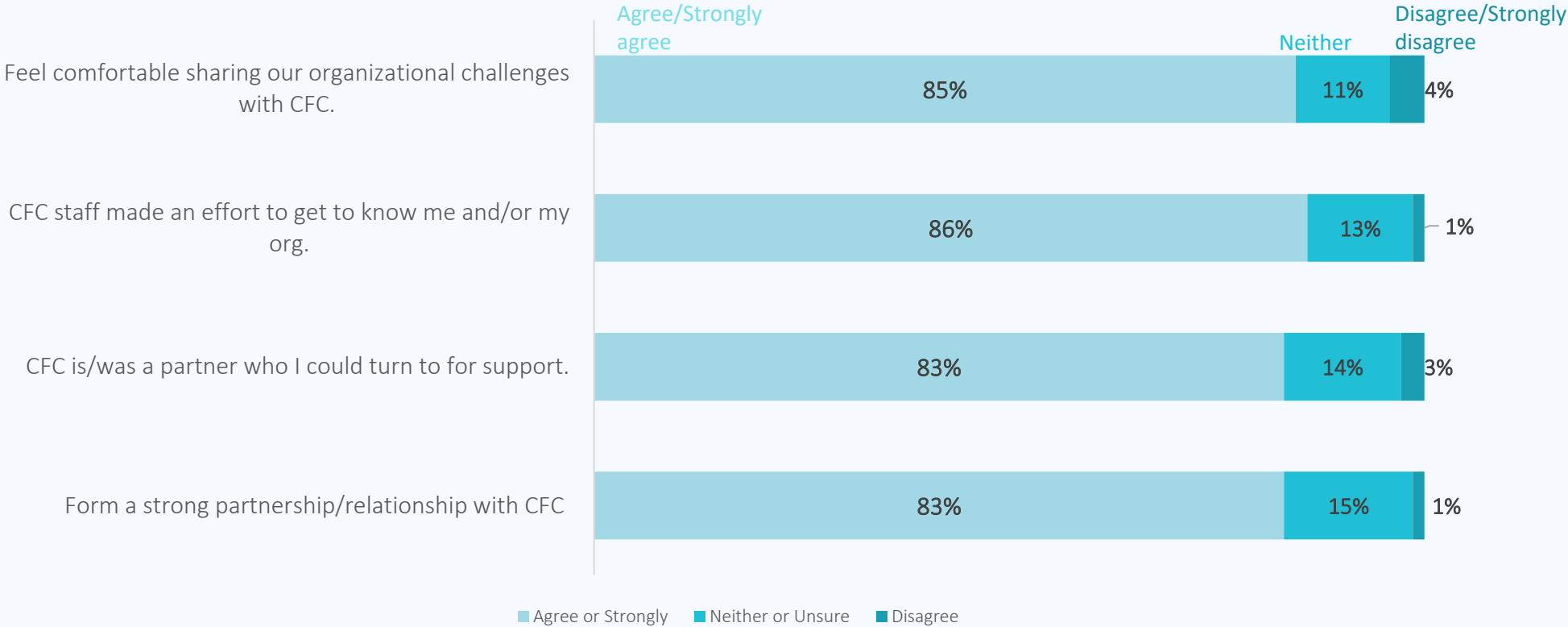
Grassroots

- Committed
- Trusting
- Open, communicative
- Collaborative

"It's more than just writing you a check [...] it feels like a long-term investment."
-Urban Grassroots Org

"When a relationship is healthy [...] there is shared power."
-Urban Non-Grassroots Org

Grantees Feel a Strong Sense of Partnership with CFC



Sources: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

Non-Grassroots Grantees Spoke Highly of CFC Staff's Accessibility

Grantees appreciate how CFC staff **make themselves available** to answer questions during the grantmaking process.

They **enjoy the site visits** as an opportunity to connect with the CFC staff and give additional details about their work that they could not include in the application.

"You are not guessing where you stand with the Foundation. You can call and talk to your program officer."
-Rural Non-Grassroots Org

"Our team likes to meet with the funders."
-Urban Non-Grassroots Org

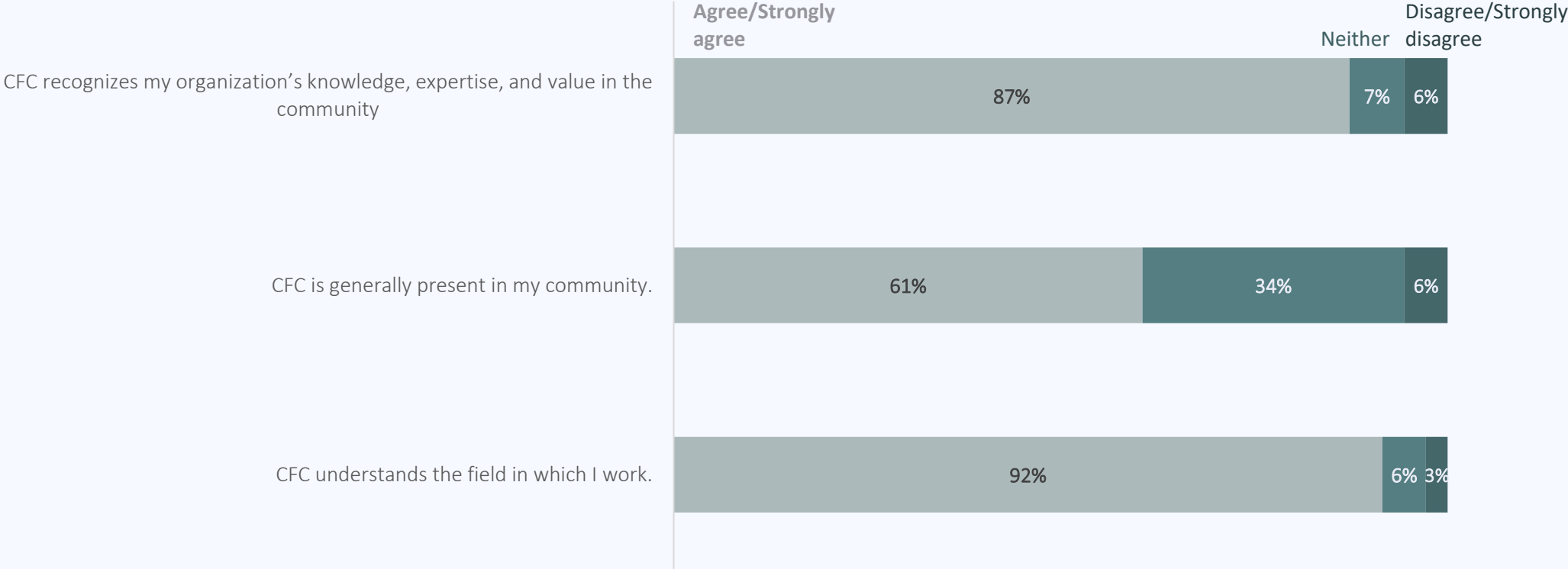
CFC's Presence in Communities Contributes to a Strong Partnership

Grassroots and non-grassroots grantees mentioned that they appreciate CFC staff **visiting their communities** to listen and learn about their work. Grantees agree that this is a practice **more foundations should adopt.**

"They came into our community [...].
You don't always get people who spend
the time to come out [here]."
-Rural Non-Grassroots Org

"[CFC staff are] consistently
showing up in our space"
-Urban Grassroots Org

Grantees appreciated CFC’s recognition of their expertise and knowledge of the field but were less certain about CFC’s presence in the community.



Sources: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

Grantees Appreciate How CFC Staff Provide Unsolicited Advice

CFC staff expressed an interest in hearing how grantees **perceive the advice** they might receive from them.

Grantees agreed that unsolicited advice is welcomed and appreciated when...

- ✓ A **positive relationship** exists between the organization and the program officer
- ✓ The grantee will **not feel obligated** to follow the advice if they do not desire to

"I don't want to be given advice. I want to be given ideas." -Urban Non-Grassroots Org

"I appreciate [the advice] in the way that they do it. [Without a strong relationship], you still feel like you have to chase the rabbit." -Rural Non-Grassroots Org

Learning Question 5:
Are organizations gaining valuable connections through their relationship with CFC?

Grantees are Gaining Some Valuable Connections through CFC

Grantees offered **mixed responses** to whether or not they are gaining valuable connections through their relationship with CFC.

Grassroots organizations stated that CFC has **occasionally connected** them to other organizations (nonprofits and vendors).

Non-grassroots grantees were **divided** between saying they **had and had not** made valuable connections through their relationship with CFC.

Source: Grantee Focus Group Discussions/Interviews; n = 16



CFC Staff Attempt to Connect Organizations in a Meaningful Way

CFC staff mentioned that they make an effort to connect organizations **doing similar work** in order to learn from each other

However, they **expressed some hesitancy** is knowing whether or not this is well-received by grantees.

"I try to think about other opportunities for funding. [Making connections] is not my greatest strength." -CFC Staff

"Sometimes you get the impression folks are not interested in knowing about other people's work because they are trying to get funding for theirs." -CFC Staff

Learning Question 6:
To what extent and in what ways
have CFC grantees been able or
unable to build capacity as a result
of funding?

CFC Funding Helped to Build Capacity within Organizations

Non-grassroots grantees mentioned...

- ✓ Growing/Scaling Programs
- ✓ Filling budget gaps

as areas where they were able to build capacity as a result of CFC funding.

Grassroots grantees mentioned...

- ✓ **Growing/Scaling Programs**

most frequently as the area that CFC funding helped to build capacity in.

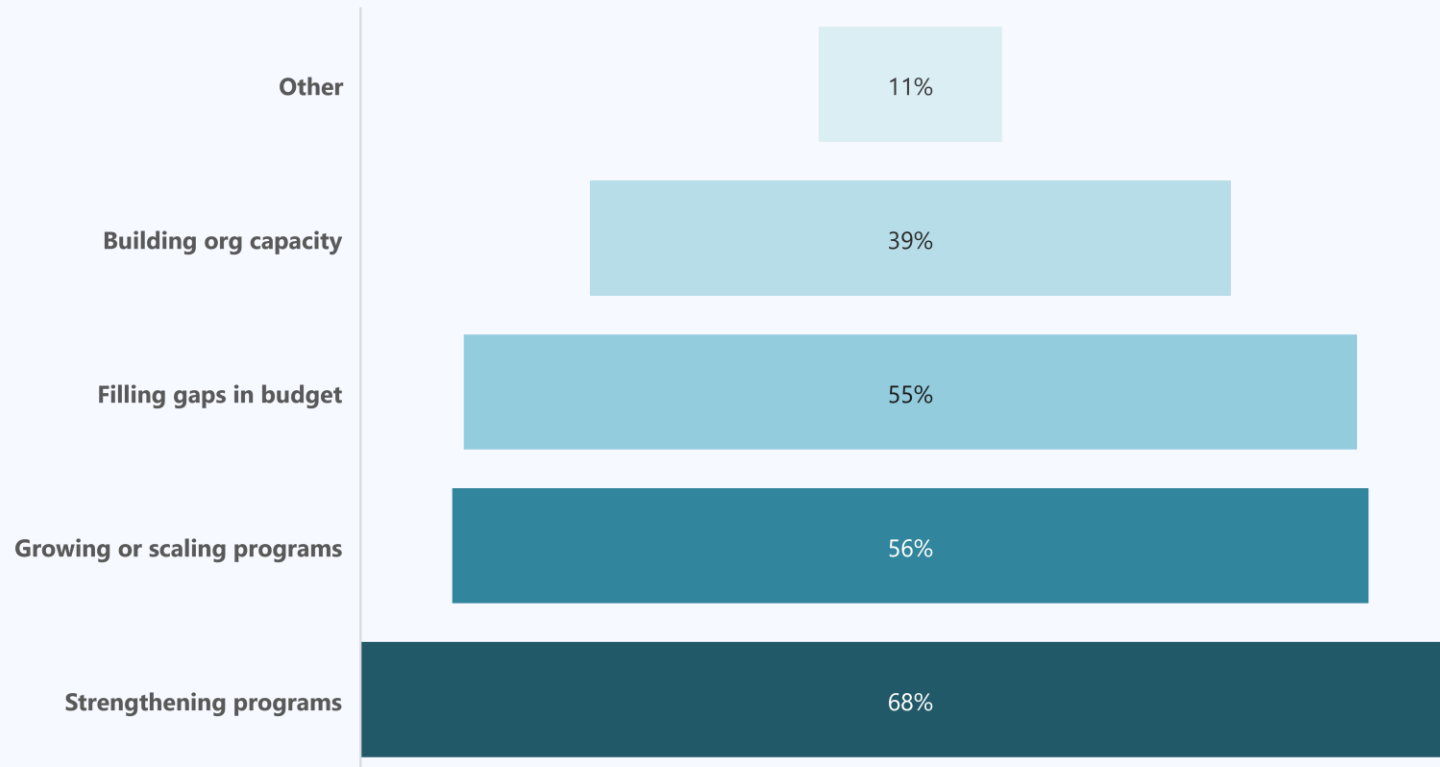
- ✓ **Deepening programs (redefining programmatic focus)**

was mentioned by one grantee.

Source: Grantee Focus Group Discussions/Interviews; n = 16



Grantees used funding in a variety of ways, with about **40% dedicating funds to capacity building.**



Source: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

Learning Question 7:

Are organizations thinking about their approach/work differently? What has contributed to this? (community voice, equity)

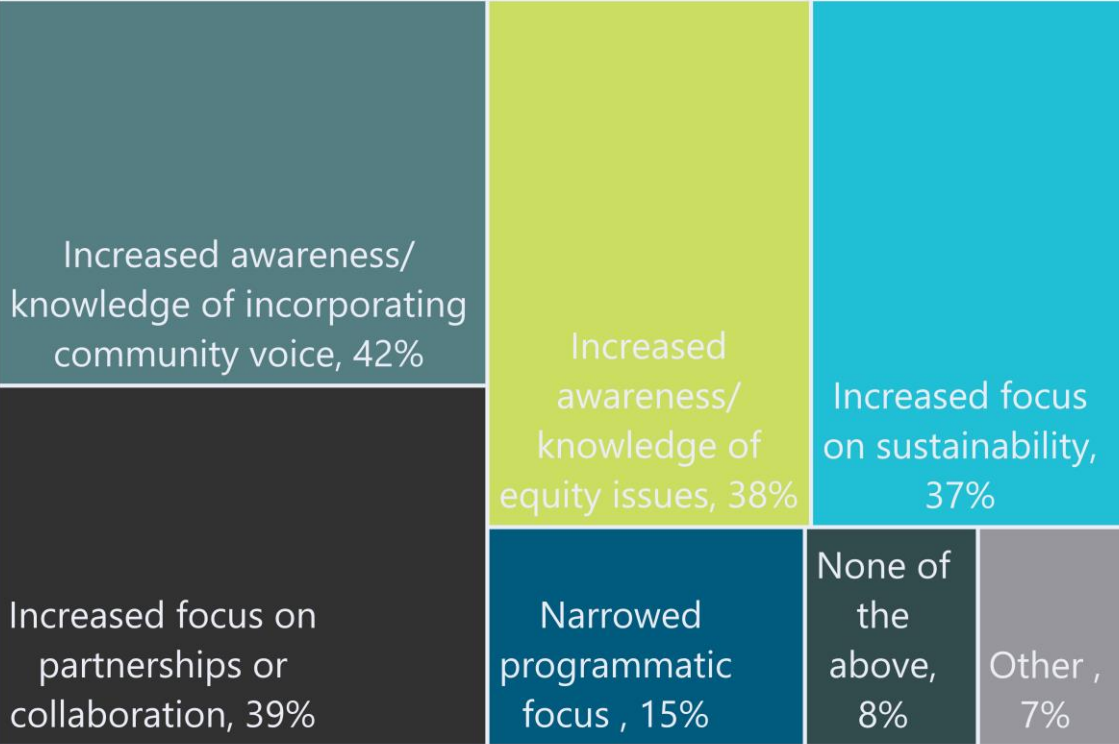
Grantees Do Not Feel that CFC is Influencing Their Approach

When asked if CFC is **influencing** the way that they approach their work—in terms of **DEIJ practices, incorporating community voice, or focusing their programmatic efforts**—grantees answered that they **did not feel a strong influence** from CFC.

"We were already doing some of those [DEIJ] things, and so Caring for Colorado just helps to reinforce and support that work." -Rural Non-Grassroots Org

"The way that Caring for Colorado models doing internal DEI is commendable, and it's not unusual at this point. It's not like Caring for Colorado is really leading edge of innovation when it came to DEI stuff." -Rural Grassroots Org

Some grantees reported that CFC has influence on their approach, primarily in the areas of community voice, partnerships, and equity issues.



"CFC certainly leads the community in some issues like focusing on equity issues but as there are other foundations doing similar things it's hard to tell what the specific influence is."
-Urban Non-Grassroots Org

Source: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

CFC Staff Recognize the Influence of Being a Funder

CFC staff hold **strong awareness of the power dynamics** between funders and grantees. However, this power can sometimes be used to **positively influence** the field in important matters related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ).

CFC staff did note that an increased focus on DEIJ, for example, might prompt some organizations to simply **say what they think they *should* say.**

Thank You



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