San Luis Valley (SLV) Nonprofit Needs Assessment
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Introduction
The San Luis Valley Rural Philanthropy Days Regional Leadership Committee (SLV RLC) is working to develop a plan for several years of community-driven nonprofit capacity building. To ensure that the programming and resources made available meet the most pressing needs of the region's nonprofits, the SLV RLC conducted a nonprofit regional needs assessment throughout the month of July 2020.
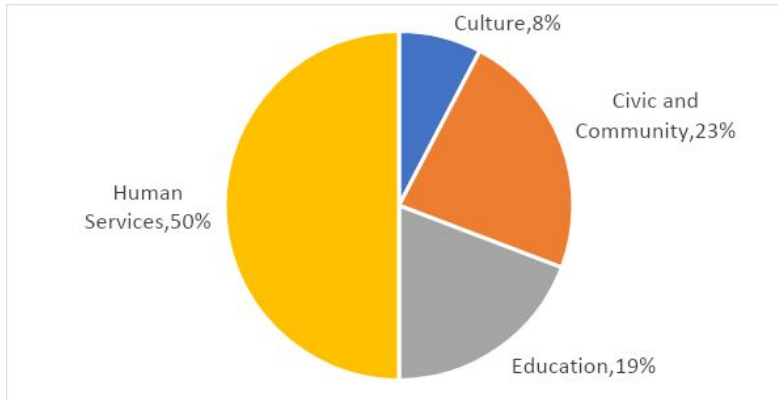
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Demographics

55 total responses were collected from frontline staff and leadership. Frontline staff and leadership were defined as follows:

- Frontline Staff – executive assistant, front desk, program staff, etc.
- Leadership – executive director, program manager, director, board, etc.
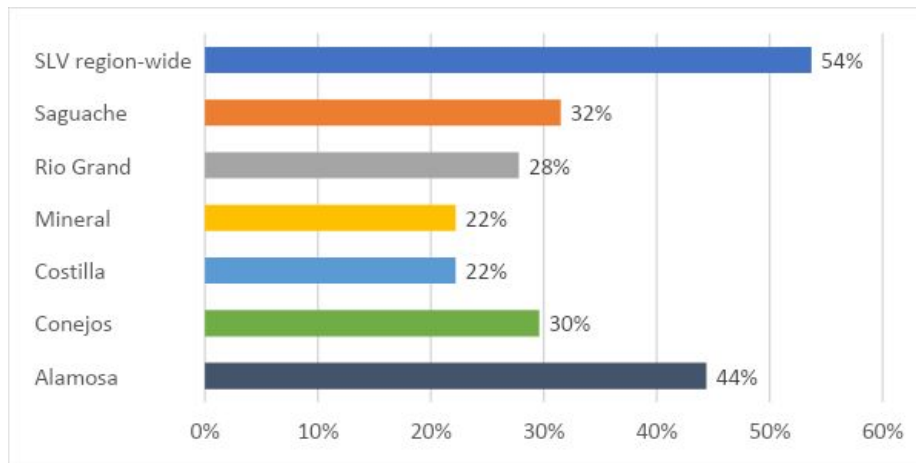
Role at Organization
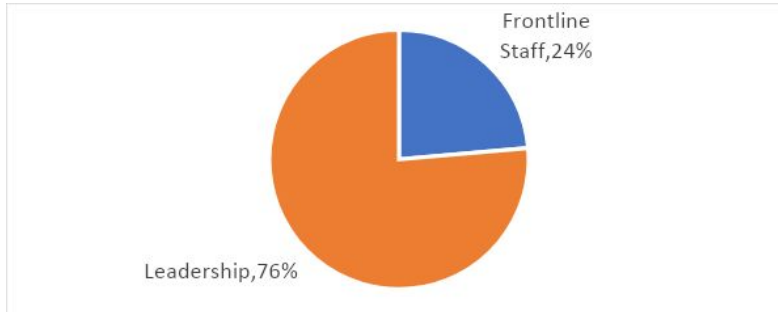
Type of Organization[1]

Counties Served

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[1] Respondent organizations include Alamosa Live Music Association, Alamosa County Public Health Department, SLV Immigrant Resource Center, SLV Local Foods Coalition, Valley to Valley Senior Care Center, La Puente Home Inc., Boys and Girls Club of SLV, and Early Childhood Council of SLV.

Analysis
Values and Mission

For both frontline staff and leadership, the majority of respondents feel that their work aligns with the mission of their organization, and that they themselves are connected to the mission of their organization. Although the majority of respondents feel that their organization effectively supports its intended communities, around 25% of leadership indicate that there is room for improvement. Commonly mentioned areas of improvement include community outreach and collaboration, the regional expansion of programs and services, and funding.

Quotes – Please elaborate on your previous answers.
- "Much of our funding is program-specific, so sometimes those rules make it difficult to be responsive to the needs of the community."
- "Our mission is clear and serves our under-served 'frontier[2]' communities well, but as such, our scale is non-competitive. Funds flow to larger orgs. The value of small-scale nonprofit endeavors in strengthening the fabric of the community and preventing descent into crisis is unrecognized and underfunded. This limits the capacity to deliver programs and services."

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[2] USDA classification of area with a sparser population than rural.

Role and Work

For both frontline staff and leadership, the majority of respondents feel that they are a valuable member of their organization, and that they find value in the work they do. Although the majority of respondents feel that their organization provides opportunities for professional development, around 25% of leadership indicate that their organization does not provide adequate opportunities for their own professional development or for their frontline staff.

Results – From the list below, please select all professional development opportunities you would be interested in. [3]

Frontline Staff	Leadership
Opportunities for Frontline Staff Collaboration (62%)	Building Sustainable Systems for Nonprofits (59%)
Resource and Knowledge Sharing with other Nonprofits (62%)	Community Outreach and Inclusion (59%)
Nonprofit Collaboration and Relationship Building (62%)	Leadership Development (59%)
Community Outreach and Inclusion (54%)	Nonprofit Communication, Marketing, and Strategies (56%)
Nonprofit Communication, Marketing, and Strategies (46%)	Nonprofit Collaboration and Relationship Building (54%)
Building Sustainable Systems for Nonprofits (46%)	Opportunities for Leadership Collaboration (51%)

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[3] The other professional development opportunities desired by respondents were developing client case management skills and antiracism, equity, and inclusion training.

Leadership Roles
For both frontline staff and leadership, the majority of respondents believe that they possess characteristics of a leader; that their organizational experience has positively influenced their professional group; and that they themselves are also leaders within their organization. Additionally, the majority of respondents indicated that their organization has provided them with leadership opportunities, even as temporary frontline staff in AmeriCorps positions.

The majority of respondents are not involved in any mentorship, either as a mentor or mentee. Although both frontline staff and leadership indicate a majority interest in having a professional mentor, only a third of leadership are interested in becoming a mentor. Reasons cited by respondents in leadership positions include the lack of capacity or availability to be a mentor and general uncertainty around what a mentoring role would entail.

Results – Do you feel like you would benefit from having a professional mentor?

Response	Frontline Staff	Leadership
Yes	64%	60%
No	27%	33%
Other[4]	9%	7%

Results – Would you be interested in becoming a mentor?

Response	Leadership
Yes	33%
No	46%
Maybe	12%
Other[5]	9%

Quotes – Please describe the characteristics you associate with being a leader.
*Common descriptions include leading by example, trusted servant, humble, empathetic, self-accountability, transparency in decision-making, and strong communication and listening skills.
- "A leader is someone who serves others and allows for those beneath them to flourish in their individual strengths, while also providing support to work through their weaknesses within the workplace."

Quotes – Please elaborate on your previous answers.
- "While [X] has provided opportunities for me to grow in leadership skills, being a leader is not something I necessarily wish to be – it's a lot of extra responsibility that I feel is overwhelming. That being said … I try to emulate the leadership qualities of my supervisor, because she does such an amazing job!"
- "Leadership is an ongoing journey of consistent dedication to personal and professional development. I don't believe there is an end result."

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[4] Other responses include – "only if there is a good fit" and "not sure what having a professional mentor would look like."
[5] Other responses include – "only if there is a good fit" and "depends on availability."

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

For both frontline staff and leadership, the majority of respondents believe that their organization has a strong commitment to DEI, and that they are satisfied with the overall climate of DEI at their organization. However, respondents did not as robustly agree that they were able to be their full selves at their organization and reach their full potential. Additionally, 20% of leadership have considered leaving their organization because they feel isolated or unwelcome. Lastly, there is a general consensus that more work can be done to provide sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a diverse staff.

Results – Do you identify as a member of a marginalized group or population?
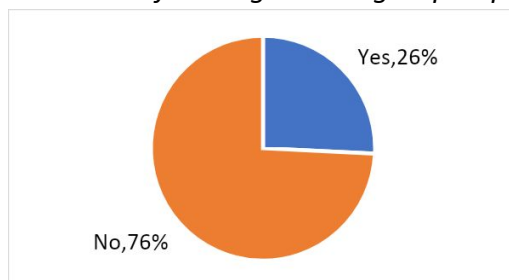
Results – I have considered leaving my organization because I feel isolated or unwelcome.

Degree	Frontline Staff	Leadership
1 – Strongly Disagree	85%	56%
2 – Disagree	0%	20%
3 – Neutral	15%	5%
4 – Agree	0%	15%
5 – Strongly Agree	0%	5%

Results – My organization provides sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a diverse staff.

Degree	Frontline Staff	Leadership
1 – Strongly Disagree	0%	7%
2 – Disagree	31%	12%
3 – Neutral	23%	39%
4 – Agree	23%	22%
5 – Strongly Agree	23%	20%

Qualitative Data – extrapolated ideas for improving organizational DEI

Demographics
- Diversifying the board of directors, board of trustees, leadership, staff, volunteers, etc.
- Ensuring that the organizational makeup is representative of communities served

Communications
- Having an organization inclusion statement
- Expressing a commitment to DEI in all public relations, including social media and printed materials
- Making sure that programs and communications are language accessible, i.e. multilingual

- Creating opportunities for both staff and community feedback

Internal

- Creating support networks for staff who are members of marginalized groups
- Providing professional development opportunities for a diverse staff
- Providing DEI training
- Promoting continued organizational dialogue on DEI
- Ensuring that all policies and policy language are inclusive
- Incorporating opportunities for advocacy

External

- Ensuring that programming is culturally competent
- Ensuring that programming is community-driven
- Providing opportunities for community outreach and participation
- Shifting program strategy to benefit a more diverse population
- Celebrating community culture and history in programming

Quotes – How are diversity, equity, and inclusion shown to be important values at this organization?

- "We have discussed increasing DEI for many years by diversifying our board and staff but largely have not succeeded in recruiting people of more diverse backgrounds. We have been more successful at developing new conservation program strategies to benefit a more diverse population."
- "We really don't place importance on diversity, equity and/or inclusion in the agency. I can't say it's one of the values the agency has, it's more of a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. We hire based only on who is the best fit for the position without any consideration for anything else."

Quotes – How do you think your organization should demonstrate its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

- "A commitment to being intentional about who is in leadership positions; creating a space where employees of color feel comfortable voicing their opinions without fear of repercussion; and a commitment to more events and social media that make it clear that our organization stands with people of color."
- "I think we can do more to celebrate cultural histories, do more to teach about the social and institutional impacts of discrimination, and provide more opportunities for advocacy."

Current Nonprofit Climate

The majority of frontline staff and leadership have adequate internet access and are able to effectively work remotely. However, around 25% of respondents are dissatisfied with their community's internet connection and around 34% of leadership find that reliable internet access is a barrier to their ability to effectively work. Additionally, many respondents noted that the rural communities they serve lack reliable internet or cellular connection. This poses a significant barrier to accessing virtual K-12 education, engaging in social interaction, obtaining information, and receiving telemedicine or other online resources.

Results – please select areas of critical community need given the COVID-19 pandemic. Please select all that apply.[6]
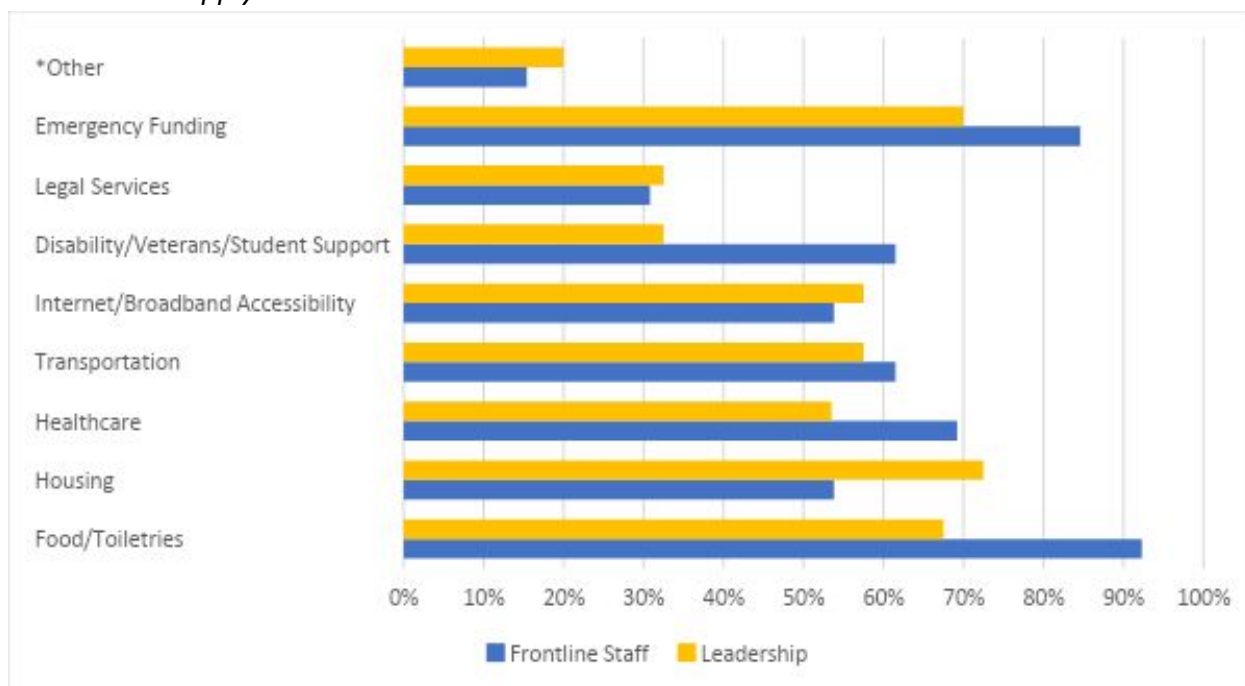
Frontline Staff	Leadership
Food/Toiletries (92%)	Housing (73%)
Emergency Funding (85%)	Emergency Funding (70%)
Healthcare (69%)	Food/Toiletries (68%)
Transportation (62%)	Transportation (58%)
Disability/Veterans/Student Support (62%)	Internet/Broadband Accessibility (58%)
Housing (54%)	Healthcare (54%)
Internet/Broadband Accessibility (54%)	

[6] The other areas of critical need identified by respondents were education; access to social services; caregiving; informal support groups; re-opening community stores; hands-on craft materials; rent, utility, and cost of living support; access to masks and cleaning supplies; technology access; alcohol and drug abuse intervention; diapers, wipes, and formula; and basic life skills and personal economics trainings.

Results – How satisfied are you with your community's internet connection?

Degree	Frontline Staff	Leadership
1 – Very Dissatisfied	8%	5%
2 – Dissatisfied	23%	20%
3 – Neutral	46%	27%
4 – Satisfied	15%	42%
5 – Very Satisfied	8%	7%

Results – Is reliable internet access a barrier in your ability to effectively work?

Degree	Frontline Staff	Leadership
1 – Not a Barrier at All	39%	22%
2 –	31%	24%
3 – Neutral	8%	20%
4 –	15%	32%
5 – Very Large Barrier	8%	2%

Results – I am able to effectively work remotely.
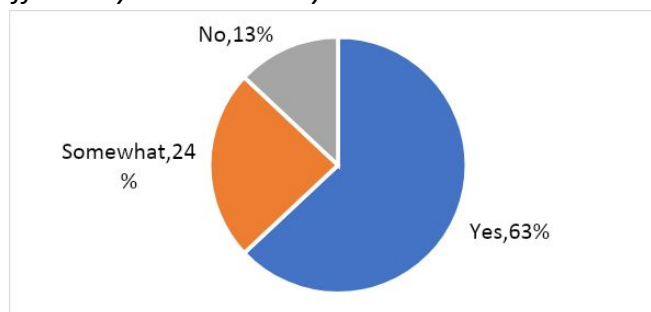
Quotes - Please elaborate on your previous answer, and include if there are any unique or very impactful actions you have seen implemented to address these needs.

- "Living in a rural area, we only have so many resources available to us when it comes to food or places to buy things. Due to COVID-19, much of our resources were deplete or lacking even more in availability so it has been a struggle to get these basic need items for our clients and ourselves. We are, however, amazed at all the support given - an example is the funding that was raised to purchase semi-truck loads of food to help stock our food pantry network! Also due to COVID-19, we are facing the loss of some federal funding for veterans. Through a partnership with a funder, we are hoping to fill in the gap of missing funds so we can continue providing for the needs of veterans during this present crisis. And lastly, our local healthcare hospitals are certainly feeling what a lot of other hospitals nationwide are; lack of patients equals a lack of funding which equals a danger of going having to close doors to the community. While I'm not the person in charge of fundraising for SLV clinics and hospitals, it is certainly a concern as we monitor clients and ourselves for COVID-19 occurrences/concerns that may need extra medical help. With only two hospitals to cover a service region of over 8,000 square miles, it is vital that we have our healthcare systems in place to serve those in need, due to

both COVID-19 and also regular care of those who need medical attention. We are making every effort to keep our doors open and hope the local healthcare can too!"
- "While many basic food and other daily living needs are being addressed in creative ways, a flood of evictions and foreclosures may be coming. The newly-formed Alamosa Bicycle Coalition is working at equitable access to reliable bikes, bike repair, and cycling safety equipment, to meet basic transportation needs for low-income adults and youth with limited or no other transportation options."
- "Transit of all types is a challenge due to sparseness and vastness of the geographic area."
- "We have seen many elderly or low-income households are struggling with technology to be able to communicate with family or medical staff. Our own nonprofit cannot allow our staff to work from home due to lack of technology. We hear from clients that they need food and housing, including help paying rent or mortgages, this need is expected to increase after unemployment runs out."

Quotes – Internet Accessibility
- "Working with the Census and having stations, people have mentioned that they don't have a cellphone or internet to fill out their census. Some people don't have water or electricity in their homes which makes it hard for them to receive information."
- "Without audio programming, those who are blind, losing vision or otherwise cannot read often do not know what resources are available and how to access them. Basic news and information from a local perspective is not assured, especially when person does not have internet."
- "My access is fairly good, but many of those we serve is not, or they do not have access. We had to provide internet to over 100 families in our community so that they could access their education, and few resources were available for that. In addition, with the increase in those accessing service, the overall service in the area has struggled and gone out several times."
- "There is only one internet provider in the valley. There have been times where this provider is down, so the internet will be down for everyone in the valley."
- "For my needs, our internet is plenty sufficient- though if we are to grow and attract businesses to our area (particularly forward-thinking tech-driven companies and jobs), we need to work toward a Valley-wide Broadband network. This is a non-negotiable need for larger companies."