



COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR COLORADO NONPROFITS

Shaping Sustainable Organizations in Rural Colorado

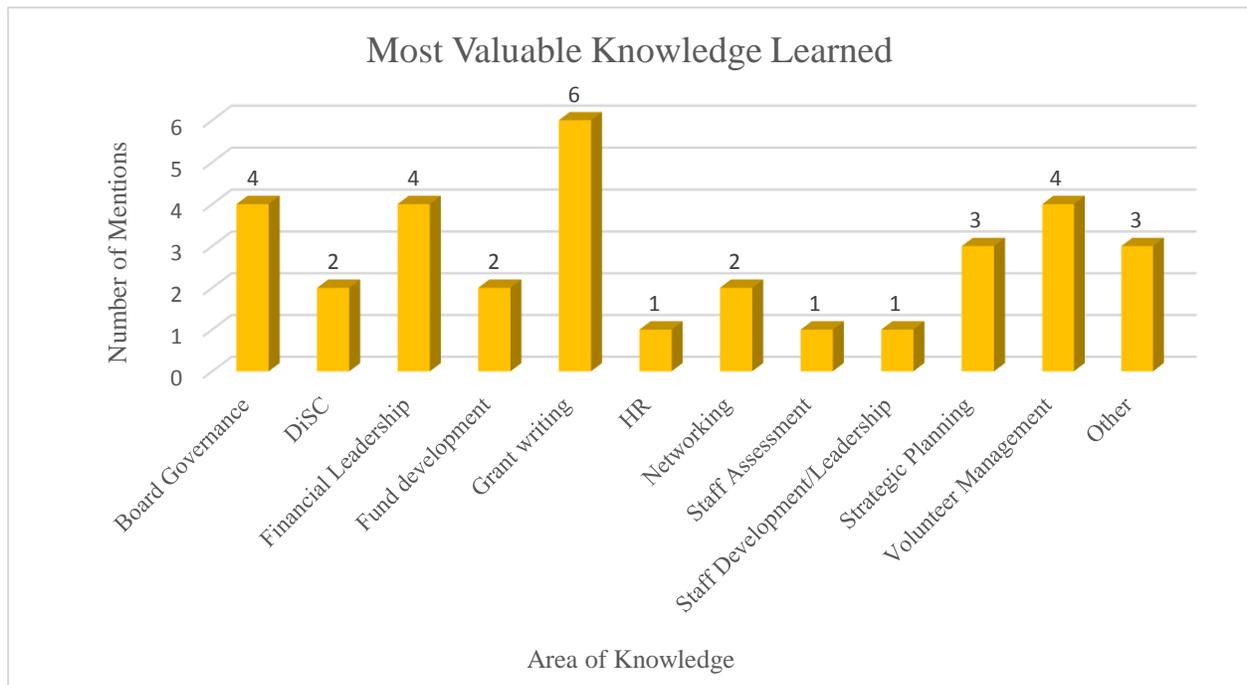
CRC was awarded the 2015 Rural Community Development Initiative grant for Shaping Sustainable Organizations in Rural Colorado (SSOR) by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The SSOR project brought two years of intensive training and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations in the San Luis Valley (SLV).



SSOR focused on improving ten SLV organizations by providing applicable strategies and tools to strengthen their effectiveness in fulfilling their mission. CRC supported these organizations on a path of growth, and assisted them in becoming sustainable nonprofit organizations capable of meeting mission, improving the quality of life for their local communities, and helping them become models of nonprofit success in the region. CRC also provided one-on-one coaching to address organizations' real-time challenges and opportunities, as well as two collaboration summit events.

The program was split into 8, 2-day sessions over an 18-month period with each session focusing on vital nonprofit best practices. Each session had sector and topic experts, interactive activities, and peer learning opportunities. Sessions were in various locations across the SLV in order to engage all recipients from across the 6-county region. Trainings topics included: leadership; organizational assessment; board governance; fund development; strategic planning; grant writing; financial management; volunteer engagement; collaboration; advocacy; and nonprofit management.

Year	Month	Day	Topic	Level of Integration	Location
2016	October	12	Collaboration Summit		Alamosa
2017	January	19 & 20	Organizational Assessment	8.3% of participants deeply integrated the learnings and tools from this session; 58% deeply or partially integrated	Monte Vista
	March	7 & 8	Boards and Governance	25% deeply integrated; 50% deeply or partially integrated	San Luis
	May	2 & 3	Strategic Planning	63.6% deeply integrated ; 72.7% deeply or partially integrated	Creede
	July	18 & 19	Fund Development Strategies	33.3% deeply integrated; 66.7% deeply or partially integrated	Alamosa
	October	18 & 19	Grant Writing, Collaboration Summit	50% deeply integrated; 75% deeply or partially integrated	Alamosa
2018	January	9 & 10	Financial Leadership and Management	25% deeply integrated; 75% deeply or partially integrated	Monte Vista
	March	7 & 8	Volunteer Engagement	8.3% deeply integrated; 33% deeply or partially integrated	San Luis
	May	15 & 16	HR and Management	8.3% deeply integrated; 50% deeply or partially integrated	Creede



Remaining Barriers to Success

When asked “What barriers still exist for your organization to meet its mission and achieve sustainability?” four out of ten respondents cited funding and financial challenges. Two respondents mentioned national immigration issues specific to their organizations’ missions. Other barriers included holding a nonprofit status, staffing challenges, time capacity, organizational cohesion, and volunteer availability.

Other Responses to the Program

When asked “What else would you like us to know about the USDA SSOR Program?” most respondents replied that they appreciated the opportunity to participate in the program, they felt their time was well-spent, and the trainers were high-quality. One respondent requested continued insight into funding sources and career opportunities.

Attendance and Coaching

Organizations’ attendance and their levels of integration were strongly positively correlated, meaning that the organizations that tended to have high attendance were also very likely to integrate what they learned into the structure and functioning of their organization. This finding indicates not only that program participants found what they learned to be valuable enough to integrate into their organizations, but also that it is necessary for an organization to attend as many sessions as possible in order to reap the benefits of the program. Additionally, 75% of participants who attended at least 7 of the 8 sessions utilized coaching sessions, and all of these participants reached high levels of integration, all over 50%. This finding indicates that coaching sessions were generally utilized by organizations that demonstrated high levels of attendance, and that the utilization of coaching sessions was linked to high levels of integration.

Praise for the Program

“I have attended many trainings and workshops over the years and this program ranks at the very top. It is high quality both in its content and in the capabilities of the presenters. Congratulations on a highly effective program!”

“The trainers were all personable, upbeat, and well-prepared, giving personal examples to elucidate their points.”

“The facilitators were obviously committed to the mission of the program and their warmth was contagious. . . the sessions were organized, lively, and fun.”

Participants

- Costilla County Economic Development Council
- Creede Early Learning Center
- Energy Resource Center
- Saguache County Sustainable Environment and Economic Development
- San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource Center
- San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition
- Southern Colorado Film Commission
- The City of Monte Vista Kids Connection

Trainers

- Andrea Swan
- Emily Shamsid-Deen
- Kim Smoyer
- Leah Rausch
- Maria Fabula
- Rebecca Gorrell

Community Resource Center would like to thank the United States Department of Agriculture for making the SSOR program possible through the 2015 USDA Rural Community Development Initiative. Thanks to this support, eight nonprofit organizations in the San Luis Valley have developed the skills and capacity to strengthen the San Luis Valley community through intensive training and technical assistance.