

Grantee Perception Report®

prepared for

Maine Community Foundation

Fall 2007

Excerpt for Maine Community Foundation Website

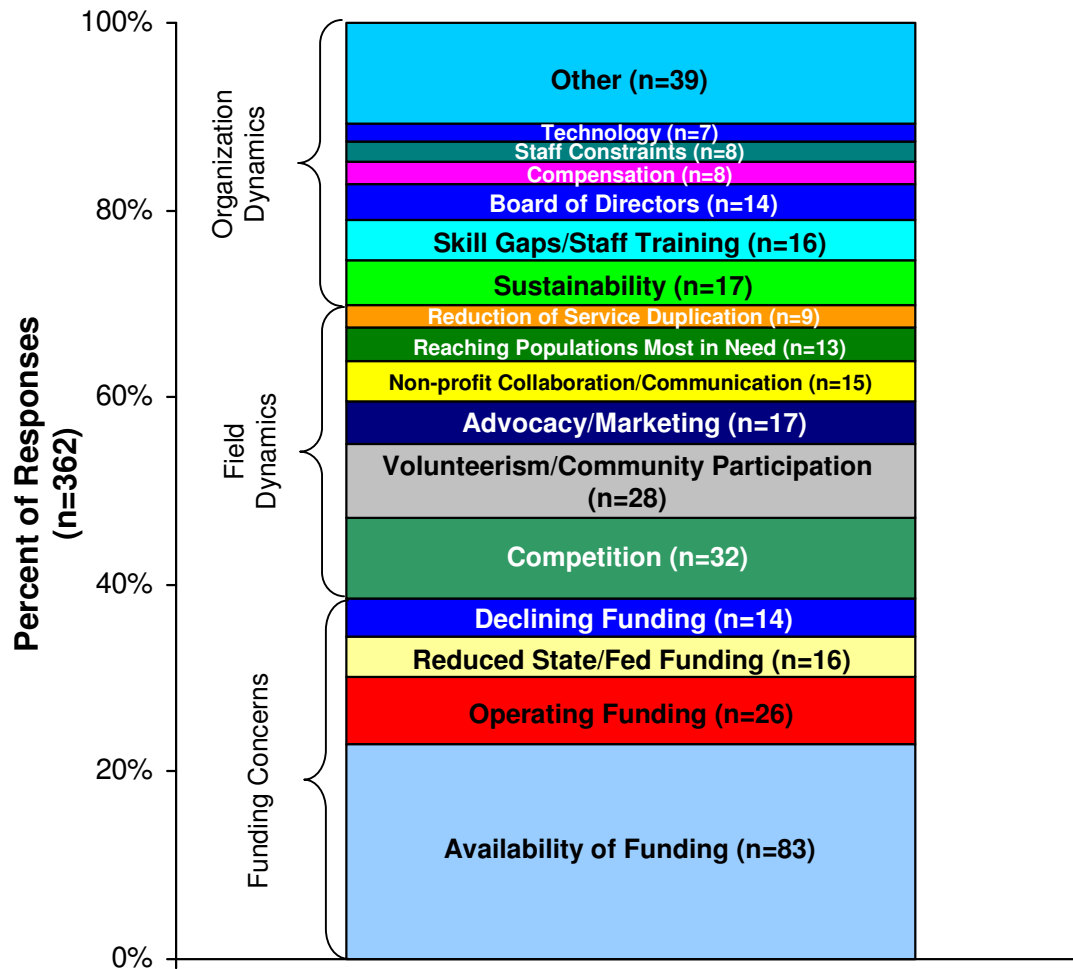


675 Massachusetts Avenue ♦ Seventh Floor ♦ Cambridge, MA 02139
Tel: 617-492-0800 ♦ Fax: 617-492-0888 ♦ www.effectivephilanthropy.org

Pressing Concerns for Non-profits within Maine (1)

When asked to identify the most pressing issues facing non-profits today, the largest proportion of responses concerned funding, growing competition among non-profits, and future participation.

“In your opinion, what are the two or three most pressing issues facing nonprofits in Maine today?”

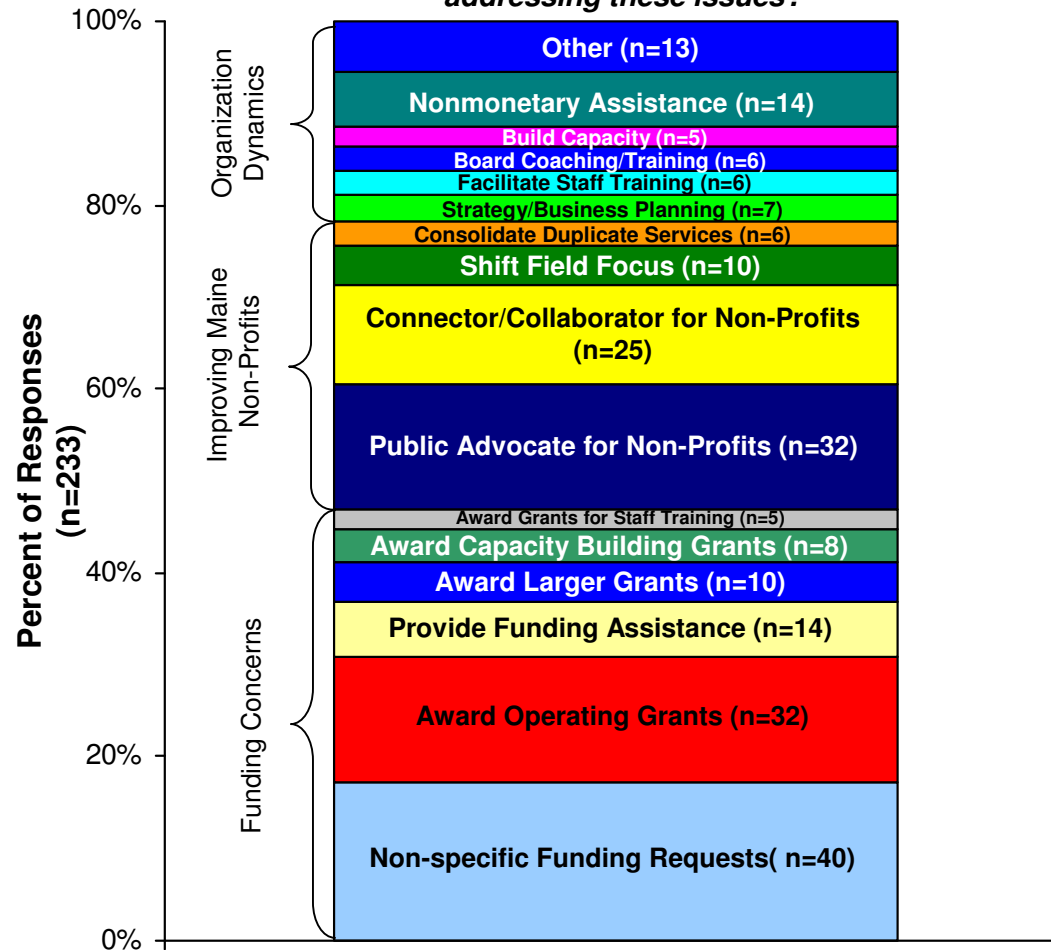


Note: No comparative data is available because this question was only asked of MaineCF grantees. 176 grantees responded to this question, and several identified multiple issues. Only issues identified at least 5 times are displayed as a unique segment and the remaining issues are collected in “other”.

Pressing Concerns for Non-profits within Maine (2)

When asked to explain the role grantees would like to see MaineCF play in addressing their most pressing issues, the largest proportions of responses indicated that grantees would like to see the Foundation shift the nature of its grantmaking towards larger, non-project specific grants, serve as an advocate for non-profits in Maine, and act as a connector within the state.

“What role would you like to see the Foundation play in addressing these issues?”

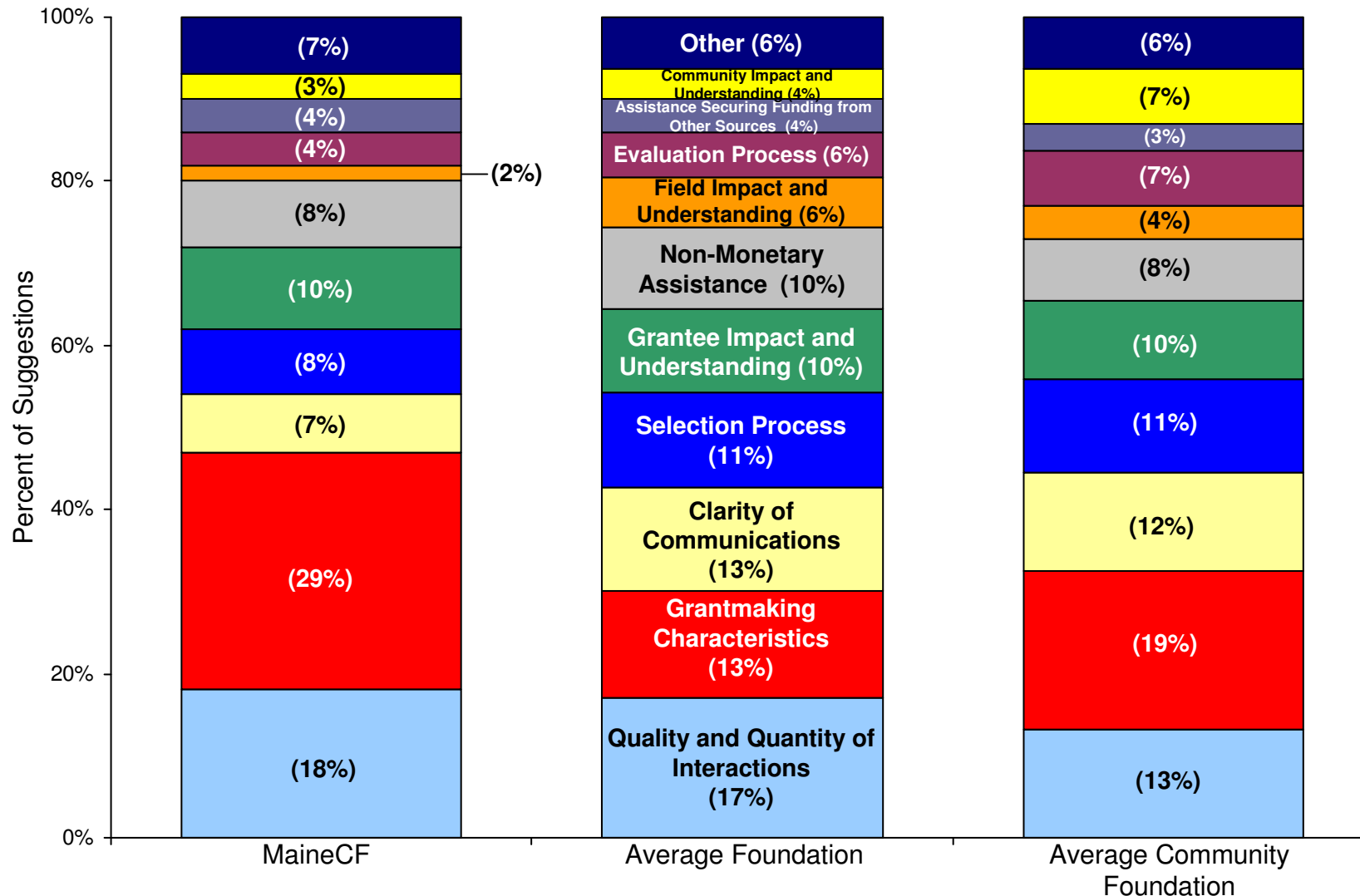


Note: No comparative data is available because this question was only asked of MaineCF grantees. 169 grantees responded to this question, and several identified multiple issues. Only roles identified at least 5 times are displayed as a unique segment.

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (1)

Grantees were asked to provide any suggestions for how the Foundation could improve. A larger than typical proportion of MaineCF's suggestions concern grantmaking characteristics.

Topics of Grantee Suggestions



Note: Average foundation includes data about 99 foundations. Average community foundation includes data about 6 foundations. There were a total of 100 grantee suggestions for MaineCF.

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (2)

MaineCF grantees made a total of 100 suggestions for the Foundation’s improvement.

Topic of Grantee Suggestion	% of MaineCF Grantee Suggestions	% Average Foundation Suggestions	% Average of Community Foundation Suggestions	MaineCF Grantee Suggestions
Grantmaking Characteristics	29%	13%	19%	<p>General Characteristics: “As a non-profit with only one local project, we have limited access to the funds. More funds for individuals would be helpful.”</p> <p>Grant Size: “Larger community development grants, \$7,500 does not go very far, and it’s a lot of work to write that proposal. I think MCF should think bigger and bolder. By funding little grants at little organizations, they support a piecemeal approach despite their advocacy for collaboration.” “Grant sizes too small. The Foundation might think more strategically about funding some programs at higher amounts.” “Some larger funding pools for the general grants would allow more significant projects with bigger impacts.”</p> <p>Grant Type: “Create additional funding for general operations.” “Less project related funding. More capacity-building and operational funding needed.” “Increase its capacity-building grant programs”</p> <p>Grant Length: “Our grant was a single-year grant, seed funding. The opportunity to have sought a multi-year, diminishing value grant at the outset would have been helpful.”</p>
Quality and Quantity of Interactions	18%	17%	13%	<p>More Site-Visits: “More travel by staff into the field.” “I would like on-site inspections and personal interviews, then I would feel MCF reps understand what we are doing. I do not want to encourage a more intrusive MCF or a micromanaging MCF, just one that is better informed and can better inform.”</p> <p>More Outreach to Grantee Organizations: “Establish more working relationships with programs that you often fund.” “More direct contact with program staff.” “Increased communications with Foundation staff and non-profits so that there is a better understanding of current projects, problems, and opportunities.”</p>
Grantee Impact and Understanding	10%	10%	10%	<p>Provide advice/assistance around sustainability: “Having dialogue with us about our needs and challenges in order to become a sustainable organization.” “In terms of really small groups, MCF could help groups look at sustainability of existing exemplary projects. Funding new initiatives every year gets the small group through, but only in the short term. Long term sustainability questions need to be asked and addressed.”</p> <p>Deeper Understanding of Grantees: “Follow-up with those that have received grants to determine emerging needs and changes in the organization to keep abreast of potential match between donors and organization.”</p>
Non-Monetary Assistance	8%	10%	8%	<p>“Provide technical support for small organizations.” “Providing educational opportunities for small non-profits to get together with other non-profits.”</p>

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (3)

MaineCF grantees made a total of 100 suggestions for the Foundation’s improvement.

Topic of Grantee Suggestion	% of MaineCF Grantee Suggestions	% Average Foundation Suggestions	% Average of Community Foundation Suggestions	MaineCF Grantee Suggestions
Selection Process	8%	11%	11%	“I would like to be able to discuss the reasons for a grant request in person to a Foundation representative.” “The online forms could be more user-friendly.”
Clarity of Communications	7%	13%	12%	<u>More Transparency Around Available Grants</u> : “I would ask the Foundation to keep educating grantees about how to apply for all the various funds to ensure as many success stories as feasible.” “More info about all grants/funds available.” “I’m not sure but it is very difficult to understand what the funding sources are. I mean, there are published funding programs, but it also seems that there are a variety of individual funds that aren’t published.” “It is unclear what makes a proposal worthy of the Foundation shopping it around to their Donor Advised Funds.” “Keep reviewing all info to make sure that anyone can understand. Continue availability of staff to answer funding questions – sources, applications forms.” “Simpler forms, clearer objectives.”
Evaluation Process	4%	6%	7%	“It would be great to receive an automatic e-mail reminder about reporting.” “The completion report could be simplified.” “More robust evaluation process.”
Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources	4%	4%	3%	“More access to donor advised funds.” “For me, more conversation about what we are trying to do (with a real person), which could potentially lead to more connections to people who might help us financially or in-kind - people both in our community and outside it, such as private donors who might wish to support our work or otherwise increase our capacity.”
Community Impact and Understanding	3%	4%	7%	“Whether we are working with State organizations or with private foundations, I feel that rural areas and their specific problems are too often lumped together with larger urban areas. The MCF has addressed this well through the various county funds. Making those funds even stronger would have a greater impact on our rural communities.” “Continue to support groups in rural areas, not just Portland. Continue to innovate in rural philanthropy. Advocate for non-profits keeping their places in communities as partners and not corporate providers.” “Continue to explore opportunities with other funders to join resources in making significant impact in the community.”
Field Impact and Understanding	2%	6%	4%	“It would be helpful if the Foundation could focus some of its resources on public policy and its impact on non profits and services to vulnerable people.” “The MCF is a generous funder and facilitator of community improvement, but I think that it could have a greater impact by devoting more resources to informing donors about their opportunities to contribute to natural resources protection and restoration.”
Other	7%	6%	6%	“Engage town leaders in strategic planning on funding priorities.”