

# executive summary

## Findings and Lessons Learned from the Partnership for Prince George's County

### Introduction

Founded in 2008, the Partnership for Prince George's County (PPGC) is an innovative capacity building initiative and funding collaborative of The Community Foundation for Prince George's County (CFPGC). The PPGC grew out of a series of community conversations held in collaboration with the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers' Sustainable Communities Working Group.



Last year, CFPGC engaged an independent evaluator, TCC Group, to conduct an evaluation of the PPGC in an effort to better understand and document the impact of its capacity building program. The evaluation sought to answer three main questions:

1. Has PPGC stayed consistent with its mission and vision of providing support for nonprofit organizations?
2. Have the grantees accomplished the capacity-building activities that they had set out to implement with the funds awarded?
3. Has the impact of the funding gone beyond the organizational development of the grantees to support the achievement of programmatic goals?

This executive summary outlines the findings of TCC Group and the key lessons learned over the course of operating the PPGC. The learnings from working in underserved/resourced communities, primarily with small grassroots organizations and in collaboration

with community leaders, stakeholders and funders have been both rewarding and instructive. We are pleased to share this information with you as we believe it will, not only, help inform our collective understanding of placed based capacity building strategies, but also deepen our knowledge of best practices in the field of capacity building. We hope that you find the information both informative and useful in your efforts and that you will share it broadly with your co-workers and colleagues. Clearly, the PPGC is a case study that we can all learn from, but it's really how we use this information to improve outcomes and achieve collective impact for the more than 4,000 nonprofit organizations in Prince George's County and the residents they serve that will ultimately determine our success.

The TCC Group has concluded that, "the Partnership for Prince George's County is having a profound impact on the organizations that participate in the process", and as public institutions and residents of the county increasingly rely on community-based organizations to provide critically needed services, The Community Foundation for Prince George's County remains deeply committed to facilitating the growth of the county's nonprofit sector. We hope that you will become one of our supporting partners and join with us to expand the PPGC, an evidenced based model for building organizational capacity and growth in Prince George's County.

# About The Partnership for Prince George's County

## Mission.

The mission of the PPGC is to strengthen and advocate for community-based nonprofits working to address the needs of traditionally underserved residents in Prince George's County.

## Structure.

The PPGC is a funding collaborative whose work is guided by the vision, voices and expertise of community stakeholders. The PPGC utilizes a committee structure, each with specific responsibilities:

### steering committee

guides the overall direction and work of the PPGC. It consists of philanthropic investors, stakeholders, capacity providers, nonprofits, and community members.

### grants sub-committee

evaluates request for support to determine program and organizational viability, readiness and leadership capacity and makes funding recommendations.

### advocacy sub-committee

identifies critical issues in the county and is responsible for advancing strategies and grantmaking in support of system reform efforts.

### fundraising sub-committee

serves as ambassadors for the PPGC to identify and engage new stakeholders and philanthropic partners.

## Theory of Change.

The PPGC's theory of change is based on the pioneering work, in organizational effectiveness, of the TCC Group. The program addresses the four core capacities of organizational effectiveness and combines different strategic activities to achieve deep and lasting impact. The PPGC uses a collaborative approach. It recognizes that capacity building is best achieved in partnership with others through a multi-pronged model that seeks change on both the individual and systemic levels.



## Framework.

The PPGC builds the leadership and organizational capacities of nonprofit organizations that provide services in three areas that collectively enable the Foundation to achieve its overarching goal of economic security.



The PPGC seeks to achieve three critical goals by addressing the four core capacities of organizational effectiveness:



## Historical Perspective.

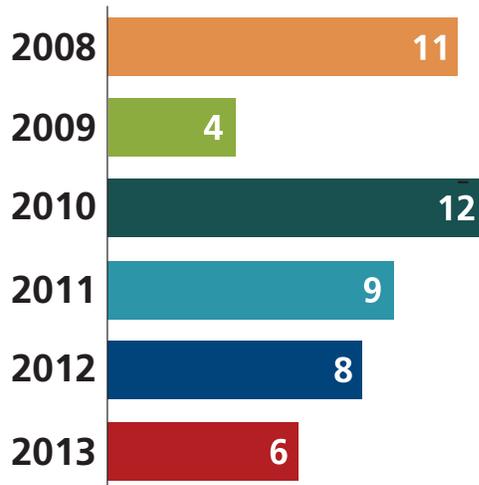
To date, over 500 nonprofit organizations have benefited from one or more services offered by the PPGC. Management assistance grantees make a twelve month commitment to a rigorous capacity building process that begins with a comprehensive organizational assessment and culminates with a certificate of completion totaling more than 80 hours of management and leadership development training.

### Organizations Served by Strategy



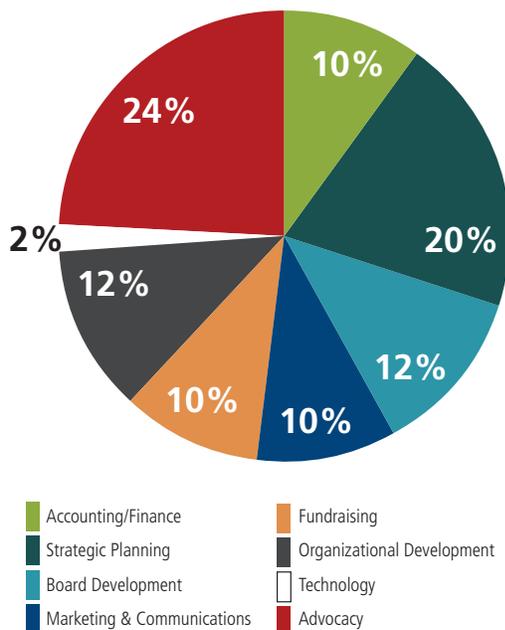
Over 500 organizations served by the PPGC

### Grants Awarded

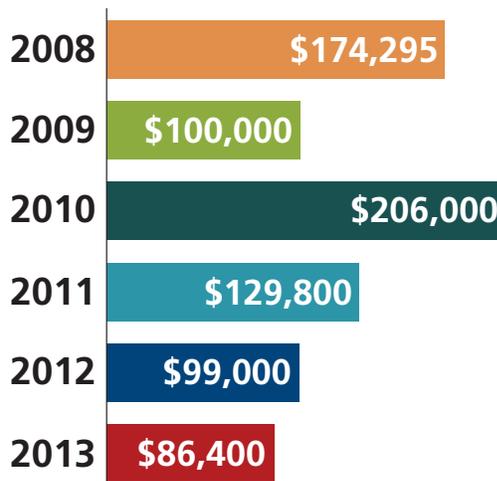


Total Grants = 50

### Grants by Type of Support



### Funds Awarded



Total Funds Awarded = \$795,495  
Average Grant - \$15,910

# Program Evaluation

## Background.

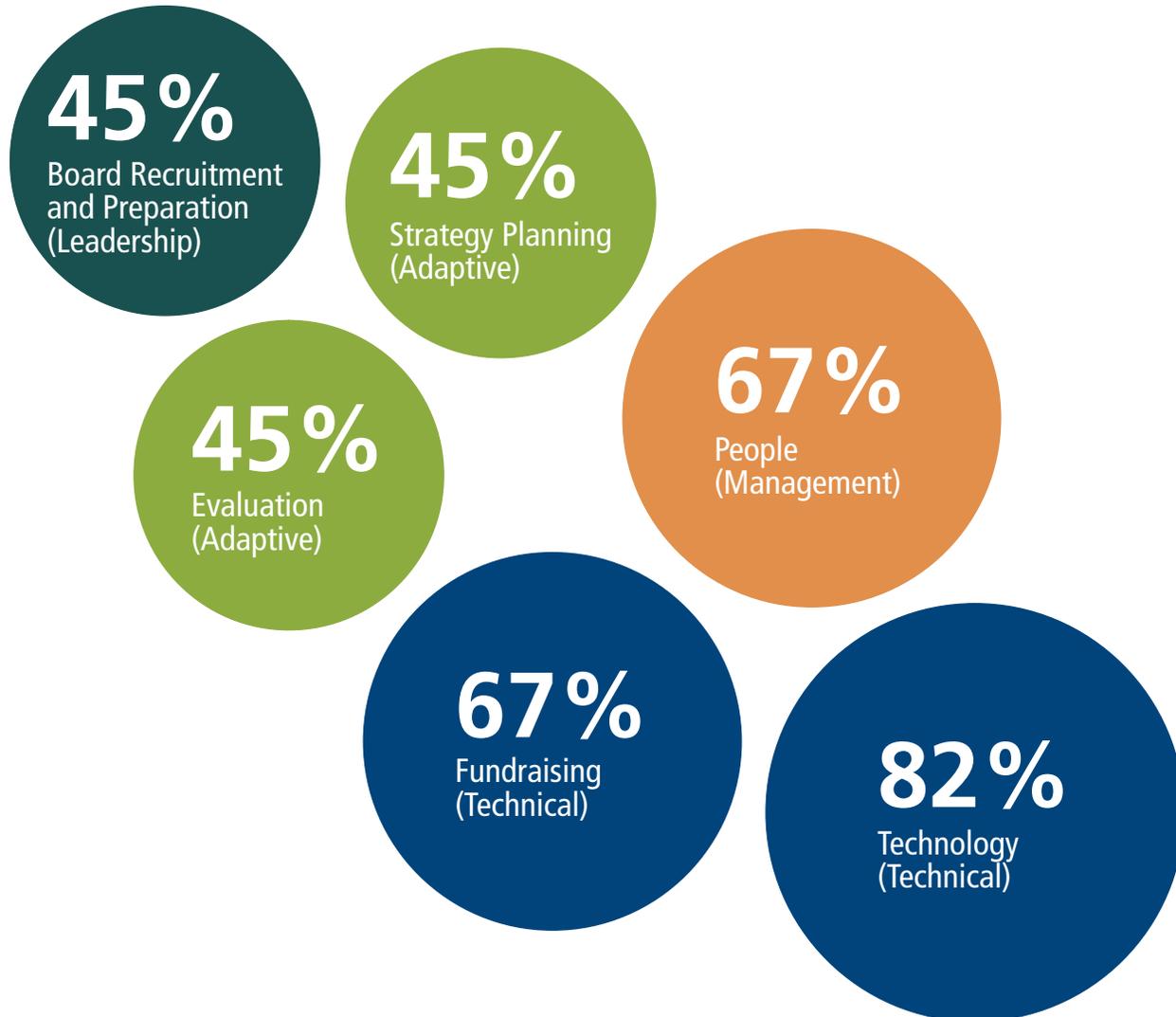
The evaluation was conducted from July to September 2012. Over the course of the evaluation, TCC Group implemented a series of activities:



The evaluation measured growth in the 19 elements that comprise the four core capacities of organizational effectiveness:

core capacity	elements
<b>Leadership</b>	Board Governance Board Governance – Recruitment and Preparation Board Governance - Effectiveness Executive Leadership
<b>Adaptive</b>	Mission & Goals Strategy Planning Program and Service Delivery Programs Evaluation Partnerships & Community Outreach
<b>Management</b>	Processes Fiscal Responsibility Financial Management and Budget Operations Financial Condition Human Resource Management & Development People
<b>Technical</b>	Communication Fundraising Technology

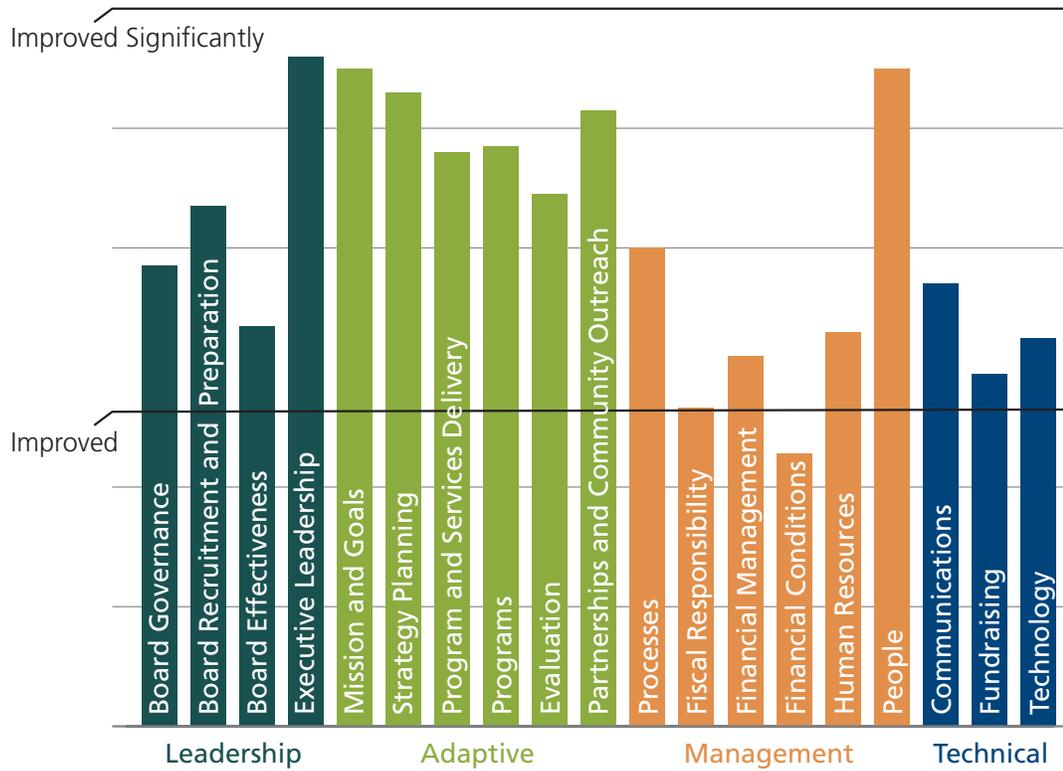
The chart below indicates the six areas of greatest need identified by participants and the percentage of organizations indicating need by element and core capacity.



This is consistent with TCC Group's observation that organizations commonly first identify management and technical capacities as their areas of greatest need.

## Capacity Building Outcomes.

The table below summarizes the improvements that occurred by element and core capacity.



The areas where participants saw the greatest improvement are indicated below with the percentage of organizations that improved by element and core capacity.



These overall improvements are consistent with TCC Group’s research that leadership and adaptive capacities often need to improve before major improvements in the management and technical capacities can take place.

## Key Strategies.

The key strategies used by the PPGC impacted the organizations served in several ways.

<b>Peer Learning Opportunities</b>	Networking with peers was successful. Organizations were able to share expertise and make new contacts in these forums. Convenings and having discussions about the topics provided a “confidence factor” – letting the leadership know that their experiences are common. The “confidence factor” helped strengthen leadership.
<b>Nonprofit Self-Assessments</b>	Pre-grant assessments increased grantees’ understanding of the gaps within their organizations.
<b>Management Assistance Grants (Consultant)</b>	Grantees experienced many successes as a result of their interactions with consultants. Interactions between grantees and consultants provided grantees with the necessary strategies and frameworks to do their work. These consultant/grantee interactions led to an ability to better prioritize and organize within their organizations.

## Findings.

The TCC Group concluded:

1. It is clear that the PPGC has stayed consistent with its mission and vision. The PPGC is effectively implementing the strategies that it intended to carry out.
2. The initiative has been successful in achieving its goals and is having a profound impact on the organizations that participate in the process.
3. While most grantees centered on areas of need related to technical capacity, specifically fundraising and technology; these were not the areas where the greatest overall improvements took place. It is a testament to how improving some areas of organizational capacity can lead to benefits in other areas critical to the organization. Leadership and adaptive capacities often need to improve before major improvements in the management and technical capacities can take place.
4. In terms of short-term outcomes, organizations have clearly gained awareness of their organizational capacity building needs and have effectively been able to prioritize what to focus on first.
5. Most organizations have developed skills and knowledge of how to manage their organizations efficiently, although in different areas. They have identified areas of common interest and maximized their time with their peers and found this to be one of the most valuable assets of the program.
6. Grantees improved the delivery of services as a result of their interaction with PPGC. As a result of their learnings through PPGC trainings and convenings organizations were able to improve program implementation.
7. There is some evidence that the organizations have developed capacity to improve their effectiveness, some have developed relationships and partnerships with other organizations and some have been able to secure ongoing support for initiatives as a result of their participation in the PPGC.
8. Grantees have effectively implemented their grants. There is some evidence that the impact of the funding has gone beyond the organizational development of the grantees to support the achievement of programmatic goals.

## Lessons Learned.

The PPGC has played a lead role in helping to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations in Prince George's County. The capacity building framework has evolved over time and provided some critical lessons about building effective placed-based capacity building programs including:

### 1. Be Mindful Of Community Needs In Determining The Target Audience.

Determine the best use of the initiative's limited resources in terms of the kinds of organizations to support. Whether key anchor organizations, small/emerging/grassroots organizations, mid size nonprofits, mature organizations or some combination thereof, this decision should be balanced against the critical current and future human service needs of the community.

### 2. Capacity Building Initiatives Should Include More Than Just Grantmaking.

Consider including both leadership development and coaching as key components of your capacity building initiative. Leadership is a core capacity of high performing organizations. Research shows that improvements in leadership capacity will likely result in an improvement in management and technical capacities. In addition, coaching enables nonprofit leaders to more effectively manage themselves and their teams to achieve greater results.

### 3. Opt For Customization Of Services Over A One Size Fits All Approach.

While most organizations can benefit from some form of capacity building, they will require varying investments of time and resources. Limited resources may not allow targeting of every program component, but customizing interventions, when possible, to address the unique needs of the organizations served and providing services that meet organizations where they are in terms of life cycle will yield better results than a more generalized approach.

### 4. Commit To A Long-Term Strategy.

Building the capacity of small to mid size nonprofit organizations requires a long-term investment. Consider an 18-24 month program to strengthen the awareness, knowledge, attitude, motivation and skills needed for organizations to develop core programs, build infrastructure and achieve adequate scale for ensuring organizational sustainability, collective action and expanding impact.

### 5. Identify And Engage High Quality Consultants.

The success or failure of your capacity building engagement, in part, will depend on the relationship, skill and expertise of the consultant(s) involved. To better meet the needs of the grantee and achieve project outcomes, provide a vetted list of high quality organizational development consultants. Many organizations have never hired or managed a consultant. Provide training and support for grantees on the selection process and consultant management to help ensure that the consultant selected is a good fit for the grantee and that the project proceeds efficiently. Ensure the consultant is fully informed, realistic about their time commitment and has the capacity to glean from funder advice and recommendations.

### 6. Utilize Each Interaction With Nonprofits As A Learning And Teaching Opportunity.

The success of the capacity building initiative is determined by the ability of the organization to glean, implement and leverage the learnings from the program. When possible, include staff and board members and encourage project consultants to meet with staff and management as appropriate to support grantees in generating organizational "buy-in"/gaining internal support for the capacity building initiative.

### 7. Consider Funding Beyond The Capacity Building Grant.

Provide funding to enable organizations to continue working with the consultant after the initial capacity building grant. Financial support will allow the organization to implement plans, strategies etc. that were developed as part of the project and will help increase the organizations understanding of and commitment to new directions.

### 8. Develop A Repository Of Resources For Nonprofits.

Provide information on best practices and resources including policies and sample templates that are accessible and easy to use to ensure that organizations have a strong knowledge base and utilize policies and procedures that reflect best practices.

## Become A Partner.

While much has been accomplished much more remains to be done. Since its inception, the PPGC has received far more requests than it is able to fund. You can make a difference in Prince George's County by:

- Learning more about community organizations.
- Supporting organizations operating in or serving underserved communities including those within the boundaries of the Transforming Neighborhood Initiative.
- Combining grants for program support with funding for capacity building.
- Volunteering with a nonprofit organization.
- Providing pro bono services to nonprofit organizations.
- Ensuring that nonprofit leaders are at the table when making critical decisions.
- Advocating on behalf of the nonprofit sector and encouraging greater dialogue and partnerships with public and private institutions.
- Supporting the Partnership for Prince George's County's effort to expand its evidenced based capacity building program.

162

Applications

50

Grants Awarded

## Supporting Partners.

The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation  
 Community First Fund  
 The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region  
 Consumer Health Foundation  
 The Estate of Leo H. Naughton  
 Fannie Mae  
 Freddie Mac Foundation  
 The Philip L. Graham Fund  
 Kaiser Permanente  
 The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation  
 Starr Foundation  
 John T. and Margaret B. Stewart Fund  
 United Way of the National Capital Area  
 Wachovia Foundation  
 The Washington Area Women's Foundation  
 Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers  
 World Bank



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**Learn more at:** [thecommunityfoundationpgc.org](http://thecommunityfoundationpgc.org)

# The Community Foundation for Prince George's County

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The Community Foundation's mission is to to strengthen the Washington metropolitan region by encouraging and supporting effective giving and by providing leadership on critical issues in Prince George's County.

