

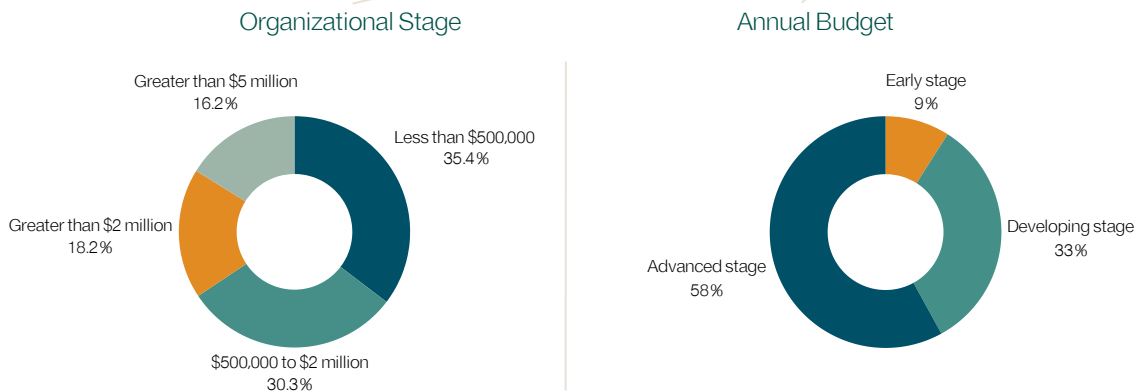
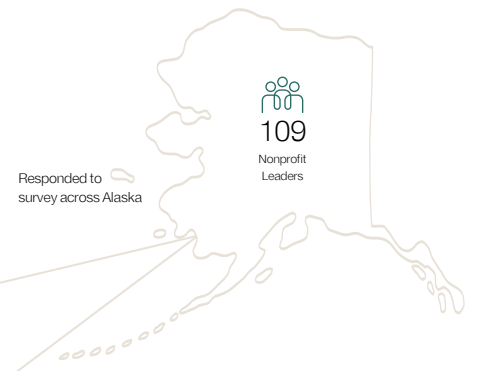
Nonprofit Capacity in Alaska

5 State Survey — Alaska Report



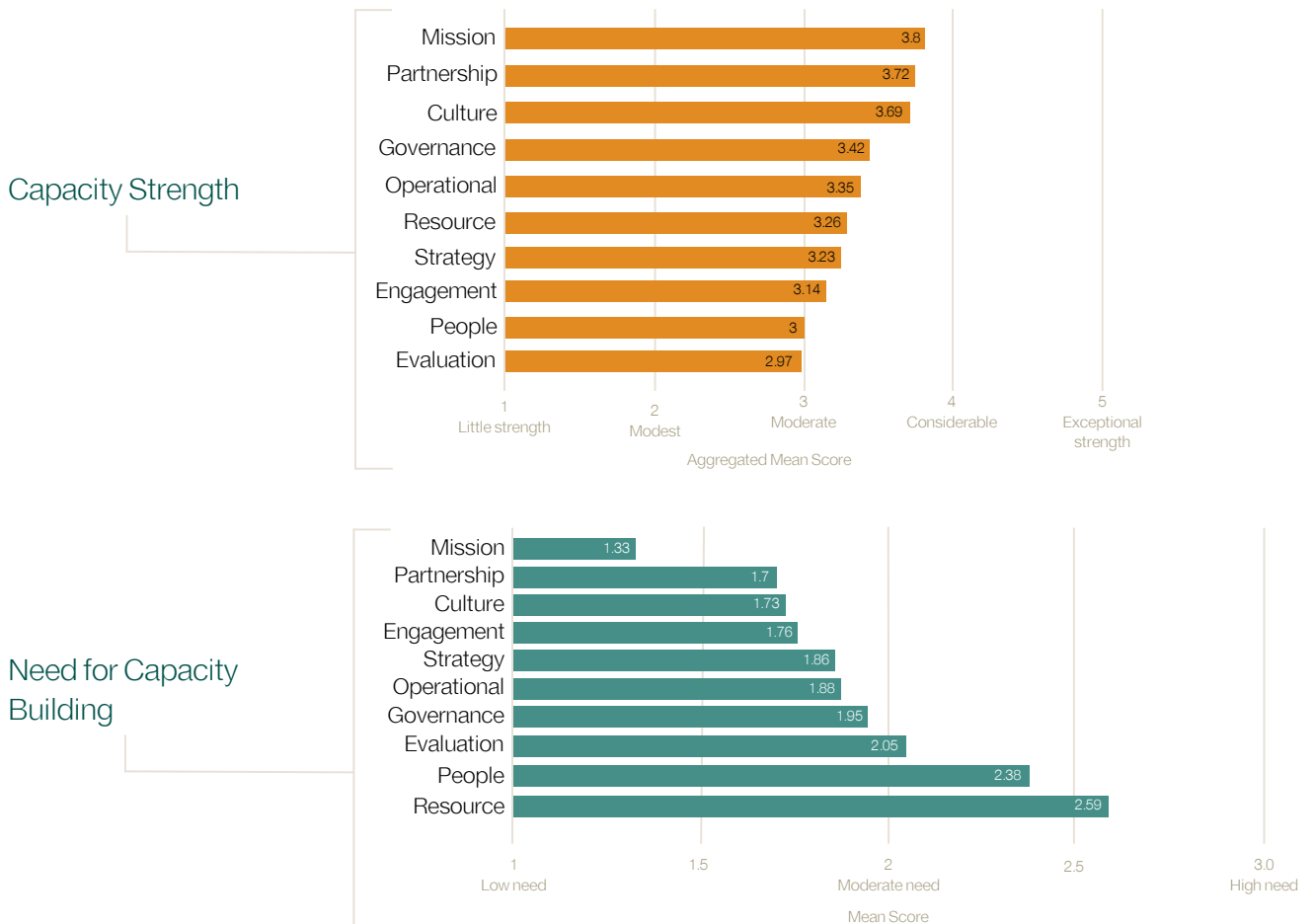
2024

The Foraker Group, along with four other states in the Northwest, administered a capacity survey to the nonprofit sector during the Spring of 2024. The aim of the survey was to learn more about the capacity of nonprofits in the Northwest.

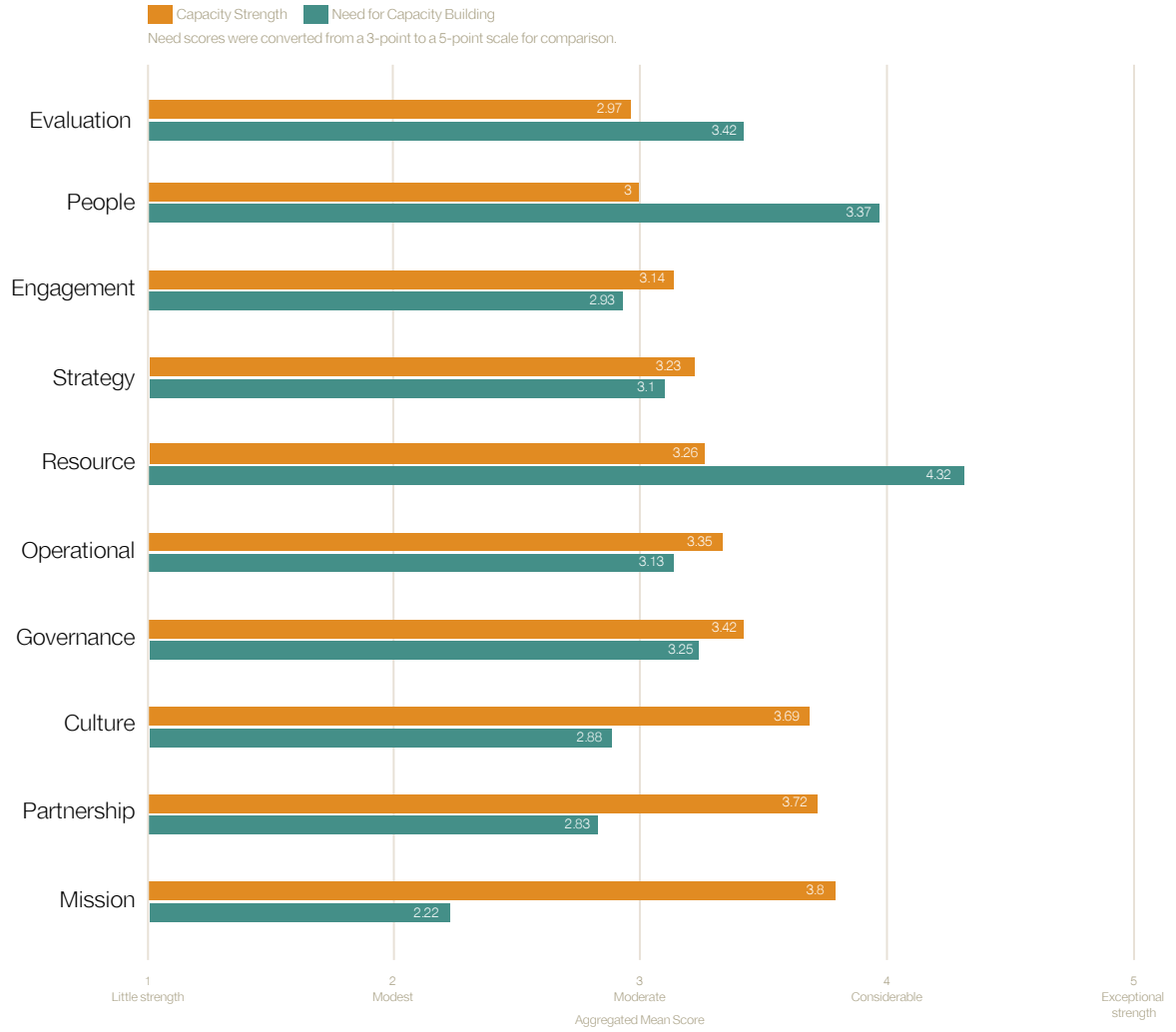


Summary of Survey Data

The survey reveals the relative strength of capacity in each domain using six indicators and the corresponding level of perceived need for capacity-building.



Ratings of capacity in the ten domains are paired with the levels of perceived need.



Deeper Dive into the Capacity Domains



Mission Capacity

Nonprofits in Alaska rate themselves highest in their identity, the clarity of cause and purpose, and the alignment of their priorities to their mission. They have the most room to grow in their focus, meaning their discipline in deciding what to do and what not to do.



People Capacity

In people capacity, nonprofits in Alaska report being strongest in retaining their most capable staff and volunteers over time. They also see their capacity as strong in having staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of their communities. The greatest opportunity for growth is having a leadership succession plan that effectively prepares them for the future. There is also opportunity to improve in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers and in giving attention to the development of staff through regular and meaningful training and coaching.

Deeper Dive into the Capacity Domains



Governance Capacity

Alaska nonprofits report having moderate to considerable strength in governance capacity. The strongest item relates to the clarity of policies and practices that guide the board, the representation of the board with a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences, identities and relevant experience, and the ability of the board to skillfully guard the financial and missional integrity of the organization. Slightly lagging in this domain are (a) the governing body holding accountable and reviewing the performance of executive leadership and (b) the governing body providing strategic guidance to shape the future of the organization.



Culture Capacity

The culture capacity of Alaska nonprofits is strong. Staff and volunteers work well together even under stress. They report that staff and volunteers are comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions, including disagreements and dissents. They make decisions with transparency and in a timely, thoughtful, and consultative way. Staff and volunteers are thriving. Communication is clear, effective, and trustworthy.



Strategy Capacity

Alaskan nonprofits have mixed ratings of strategy capacity. The strongest areas of capacity are in strategic planning. They also rate themselves strong in their ability to be adaptable and innovative. The lowest rated items are (a) the practice of engaging a diverse group of people in setting strategy and (b) monitoring and communicating progress on strategy to staff, board, and partners.



Resource Capacity

The strongest areas of resource capacity for Alaska nonprofits are related to finance and financial practices. The most opportunities for improvement are areas of fundraising. Nonprofits struggle to have sufficient and diverse funding to meet the commitments of the mission.



Evaluation Capacity

Evaluation capacity is the lowest of the capacities measured in this survey. The strongest area of capacity is the perception that organizations have a robust culture of learning and improvement. There are opportunities for improving the capacity in nonprofit skills, resources, and methodologies to evaluate and communicate impact.



Operational Capacity

Overall, nonprofits in Alaska show moderate to considerable strength in operations. The highest rated items in this capacity are related to financial and administrative procedures. The lowest rated item is about having the right level of resources to match the scale and scope of their commitments.

Deeper Dive into the Capacity Domains



Engagement Capacity

The engagement capacity of Alaskan nonprofits is mixed in strength. Most strongly, nonprofits are present and visible in communities. They have a commitment to equity that makes a transformational impact on what they do and how they do it. The area for greatest improvement is in the ability to organize and mobilize the community to influence public policy.



Partnership Capacity

Alaska nonprofits are strong in partnership capacity. They join others in effective collaboration and exchange of learning. The area of greatest opportunity for improvement is in cross-sectoral collaborations and joining others strategically in movement-building.

5 Takeaways for Capacity Building

1

Nonprofits are not exempt from the larger issues in Alaska including a high out-migration of working age adults creating workforce shortages, childcare crisis, and housing availability at all income levels. The people and resource capacity of Alaska's nonprofits are stretched while the demands on the sector are increasing.

2

Mid-size organizations have the most room and desire to grow but often have less ability to retain it due to high turn-over of board and staff. They work tirelessly and have boundless potential, but making the time and space for capacity-building feels limited.

3

Offering isolated services of support is not enough for nonprofits to overcome the challenges of capacity. Creating and nurturing supportive ecosystems to fortify and sustain nonprofits holistically, including the financial, emotional, collaborative, and strategic aims of nonprofits, is needed throughout Alaska.

4

Developing leadership for the future, including succession planning, is critical for Alaska's nonprofits. Sustaining the health and vitality of current leadership should be matched with building the strength and capacity of future leadership. This will require focused attention and investment in planning, recruiting, and training the nonprofit leadership of the future and also avoiding the surprises of executive transition that come without a board approved succession plan.

5

Solving the challenges facing nonprofits is not for nonprofits alone. Government, for-profit, and philanthropy must all be part of the change and work closely with state nonprofit associations to enhance the capacity of the nonprofit sector. A coordinated effort from all sectors is needed to resource Alaska nonprofits. Building the capacity of nonprofits is best done when philanthropy works with and through local, regional, and statewide nonprofit networks and associations.

Funded by:



Conducted by:




Alaska

The Foraker Group serves as the nonprofit state association and capacity building organization for nonprofits and tribes across Alaska. We are dedicated to increasing the leadership and management skills of professionals and volunteers through an innovative approach focused on the [Foraker Nonprofit Sustainability Model](#).

www.forakergroup.org

For more information on the NWCS or to explore partnership opportunities in disseminating the 2024 results, please contact one of the following partners:

 Kimberly Thornbury, Ph. D. at the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust via email at info@murdocktrust.org

 Steve Patty, Ph.D., at Dialogues in Action via email at info@dialoguesinaction.com