
2025

MACC NETWORK ADVOCACY MESSAGES



Metropolitan Alliance of Connected Communities

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We bring together the voices, wisdom, and influence of our collective to co-create a better narrative for our sector that support's our network's shared vision for equitable, thriving, abundant communities.

At MACC's 2024 Annual Meeting we brought together leaders from across our network to share their voices in a mastermind session on the value of our sector.

We asked our leaders to share their perspectives on several key areas and use their voice to directly shape our advocacy messaging for the coming year. We know there is a great amount of work ahead in the fight for pay justice, full cost coverage, and the value of our people, our work, our sector.

We asked our member leaders to dig into two key questions:

Question 1: *What do you want our MN political leaders to know about the work you do and why it's important in our community right now?*

Question 2: *What is most misunderstood about the work and the cost of actually running a nonprofit and driving change?*

The report below shares the summaries and key messages we pulled out of the conversation as a whole as well as the individual breakout rooms from the event.

INTRODUCTION

KEY THEMES

Below are the key themes that emerged across all 5 breakout rooms.



Nonprofits as Essential Community Anchors

Nonprofits provide life-saving services and address systemic challenges such as homelessness, hunger, abuse, healthcare, and education. They are deeply embedded in communities, offering accessible and tailored solutions.



Funding Challenges

Nonprofits face systemic underfunding and reliance on inconsistent or restrictive government contracts. Securing grants is competitive, while philanthropic contributions are shrinking, creating a gap in operational sustainability.



Workforce and Operational Struggles

Nonprofit staff often face low wages, burnout, and financial insecurity, despite being critical to service delivery. Operational costs, including advocacy and administration, are frequently misunderstood and underfunded.



Addressing Public and Political Misconceptions

Misunderstandings about the nonprofit sector as inefficient or purely charitable organizations hinder funding and trust. Nonprofits are professional, accountable, and vital partners in addressing societal needs.



Collaboration and Systems Interdependence

Nonprofits work within complex systems where housing, healthcare, education, and employment intersect. Enhanced collaboration with government and other stakeholders is crucial but underdeveloped.



Prevention and Equity

Nonprofits excel in prevention-focused work that addresses systemic inequities and reduces long-term costs, such as early interventions in healthcare and education.



Storytelling and Public Awareness

Sharing success stories and personal impacts is critical to building trust, combating misinformation, and demonstrating the value of nonprofit work.

ADVOCACY MESSAGES

Below are key advocacy messages across all 5 breakout rooms and potential Calls to Action.

Theme	Key Message	Call to Action
Nonprofits Are Community Lifelines	Nonprofits fill critical gaps, providing life-changing services where others cannot.	Recognize nonprofits as indispensable partners and invest in their ability to address urgent societal needs.
The Cost of Doing Good Work	Nonprofits require adequate and consistent funding to sustain operations and address rising demands.	Fund the full cost of nonprofit services, including administrative and infrastructure needs.
Support for the Nonprofit Workforce	Nonprofit professionals are essential workers and deserve fair wages and mental health support.	Invest in the well-being of nonprofit staff to sustain high-quality, impactful services.
Nonprofits Save Costs Through Prevention	Prevention programs reduce long-term societal costs and improve equity.	Prioritize funding for early intervention programs to create healthier, more equitable communities.
Combating Misconceptions	Nonprofits are professional organizations delivering measurable results, not merely charities.	Educate policymakers and the public on the efficiency and impact of nonprofits.
Collaboration and Systemic Change	Nonprofits are key partners in a broader system of social support.	Strengthen partnerships and foster collaborative solutions to address interconnected community challenges.
Amplify Stories of Impact	Sharing real-world impacts highlights the transformative work of nonprofits.	Use storytelling to secure funding, build trust, and advocate for sustained support.
Advocacy as a Necessity	Advocacy isn't a luxury—it's essential for systemic change.	Fund nonprofits' advocacy efforts to ensure their insights shape policies and drive equitable solutions.

01 The Value of Nonprofits

"Nonprofits are the frontline defenders of our communities. From preventing violence to addressing homelessness and poverty, we step in before crises escalate, saving lives and reducing long-term societal costs."

"Investing in nonprofits isn't just charity—it's smart economics. We deliver unparalleled impact for every dollar spent, addressing root causes and creating lasting change."

02 Accountability and Trust

"Our sector holds itself to the highest standards of accountability. With rigorous audits and transparent reporting, nonprofits demonstrate results that build stronger, healthier communities."

"When you invest in nonprofits, you're supporting a system that delivers proven outcomes with integrity and care."

03 Equity and Workforce Support

"Nonprofits provide vital services under intense resource constraints. Yet we stretch every dollar while ensuring our staff—our most valuable asset—receive fair wages and benefits."

"Equitable funding for nonprofits is an equity issue. Our teams, often made up of diverse and local leaders, deserve the same respect and support as any other sector."

04 Funding Realities

"It costs just as much to run a nonprofit as it does any other organization. From healthcare to retirement benefits, our operating costs reflect the real costs of living."

"Outdated funding structures limit our ability to thrive. It's time to recognize nonprofits as mission-driven businesses that need adequate support to sustain their vital work."

05 Misconceptions About Nonprofits

"Nonprofits are businesses with a mission. We balance budgets, manage complex operations, and deliver measurable results. It's time to dispel the myth that nonprofits operate differently from for-profit organizations."

"A world without nonprofits would be a world in crisis. From food shelves to shelters, we fill the gaps where other systems fall short, keeping our communities whole and thriving."

06 Call to Action for Policymakers

"Support nonprofits as equal partners in solving our biggest societal challenges. Allocate funding that reflects the true costs of our work, and trust us to deliver outcomes that benefit everyone."

"Recognize the sector's contribution to economic stability and public well-being. Together, we can create communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

01

Nonprofits as Community Anchors: Nonprofits are not just service providers; they are trusted community partners deeply rooted in neighborhoods. Their work addresses the root causes of social challenges and fosters vibrant, resilient communities.

Why it matters:

- They provide essential services like hunger relief, housing support, and youth development.
- Nonprofits fill gaps where government and private sectors cannot, offering personalized, grassroots support.

02

Economic Value and Efficiency: Nonprofits deliver exceptional value, doing more with less. Investing in nonprofits is a cost-effective way to drive social change and community development.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits operate on tight budgets, often providing services at a fraction of what government programs cost.
- They stretch every dollar while maintaining rigorous accountability and high-impact outcomes.

03

Critical Role in Social Equity: Nonprofits advance equity by addressing systemic disparities and empowering marginalized communities.

Why it matters:

- Programs like alternative education, job training, and violence prevention tackle barriers to opportunity.
- They are early responders, preventing crises like homelessness or incarceration through proactive interventions.

04

Investment in Sustainability: Adequate funding for nonprofits is not optional — it is essential for building strong communities and a robust social safety net.

Why it matters:

- Funders must recognize the "fully loaded costs" of nonprofit operations, including infrastructure, technology, and staff well-being.
- Long-term funding and flexibility in grants are critical to enable strategic growth and innovation.

05

Collaboration and Holistic Support: Nonprofits excel in creating interconnected networks of care, providing holistic solutions to complex problems.

Why it matters:

- By collaborating across sectors, nonprofits ensure seamless access to services for individuals and families.
- Investments in centralized systems and cross-agency collaboration enhance service delivery and impact.

06

Recognition and Support for Nonprofit Workforce: The people powering nonprofits deserve fair compensation and resources to thrive.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofit staff perform emotionally and physically taxing work, often without adequate pay or benefits.
- Supporting their mental health, providing livable wages, and investing in professional development are critical.

07

Breaking Misconceptions: Nonprofits are businesses with high standards, not mere charities. They are held to rigorous accountability while delivering transformative impact.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits innovate and deliver measurable outcomes, often exceeding expectations of government and private sectors.
- Misunderstandings about nonprofit costs and operations hinder their ability to maximize impact.

BREAKOUT 3

01

Essential Role of Nonprofits: Nonprofits are the backbone of community well-being, addressing critical needs like housing, food security, and family support.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits are trusted community partners, reaching underserved populations with personalized and accessible services that government agencies or private entities cannot provide.

02

Funding Justice and Sustainability: Fully funding nonprofits is not optional — it's a justice issue. Adequate funding ensures the continuity of life-changing services.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits cannot operate effectively without covering administrative and infrastructure costs. Breaking the "overhead myth" is essential to sustaining long-term impact.

03

Workforce Equity and Well-Being: Nonprofit employees are the heart of our work. They deserve competitive wages, fair benefits, and a sustainable career path.

Why it matters:

- Staff face financial hardship and burnout despite driving meaningful change. Investing in their well-being directly improves service delivery and outcomes.

04

Correcting Misunderstandings: Nonprofits are efficient, professional organizations — not merely charities. They are vital partners in delivering essential public services.

Why it matters:

- Misconceptions about fraud and inefficiency lead to excessive compliance burdens, diverting resources from direct services. Recognize the sector's integrity and impact.

05

Addressing Political Polarization: Nonprofit work transcends political divisions. Communities of all backgrounds rely on their services.

Why it matters:

- Political mischaracterizations hinder bipartisan support. Policymakers must prioritize the needs of people over party lines to strengthen community support systems.

06

Partnership and Efficiency: Nonprofits are efficient subcontractors for government services, uniquely positioned to deliver impactful results.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits operate closer to the communities they serve, leveraging local knowledge and relationships to maximize effectiveness at lower costs.

07

Preparing for Future Challenges: Stable, diversified funding is essential to safeguard communities against future uncertainties.

Why it matters:

- Policy changes and funding cuts threaten critical programs. Supporting nonprofits through consistent and flexible funding ensures continuity and resilience.

08

Strengthening Advocacy and Collaboration: Nonprofits excel when we collaborate, educate policymakers, and amplify our collective voice.

Why it matters:

- Strong networks and partnerships within the sector improve efficiency and visibility, ensuring that nonprofits have the resources to drive systemic change.

BREAKOUT 4

01

Nonprofits as Essential Community Anchors: Nonprofits save lives and strengthen communities. They step in where government programs fall short, providing food, housing, and healthcare to those in need.

Why it matters:

- Invest in nonprofits as trusted, grassroots organizations that deliver critical services directly to the community.

02

Challenges in Political and Public Perceptions: Nonprofits are transparent, accountable, and effective. Political polarization and public misunderstandings hurt organizations that are vital to civil society.

Why it matters:

- Support policies that foster trust and understanding of nonprofits' indispensable role in maintaining social stability and equity.

03

Workforce and Sustainability Concerns: Nonprofit workers are the backbone of community services but often face burnout and financial challenges.

Why it matters:

- Fund fair wages and mental health support for nonprofit staff to ensure sustainable, high-quality service delivery.

04

Economic Pressures and Funding Instability: Inflation and economic pressures increase demand for nonprofit services while straining resources. Nonprofits need consistent funding to thrive.

Why it matters:

- Advocate for long-term, flexible funding solutions that allow nonprofits to plan strategically and address community needs effectively.

05

Role in Equity and Prevention: Nonprofits address systemic inequities and provide tools for self-sufficiency. Their prevention-focused programs save money and improve lives in the long run.

Why it matters:

- Support funding for programs that reduce disparities and empower individuals, fostering stronger and more equitable communities.

06

Collaboration with Government and Larger Systems: Nonprofits are efficient partners to government, delivering services with deep community trust and lower overhead costs.

Why it matters:

- Strengthen partnerships between nonprofits and government, ensuring fair funding for the critical work nonprofits undertake as extensions of public programs.

07

Need for Better Storytelling and Advocacy: Nonprofits make a measurable difference. Their stories of impact reflect the transformative work happening every day in communities.

Why it matters:

- Share and amplify nonprofit success stories to build public trust and secure ongoing support for their missions.

01

Nonprofits Solve Complex Problems: Nonprofits tackle the toughest challenges — child abuse, housing insecurity, disability support, and healthcare gaps — providing essential, life-changing services where others cannot.

Why it matters:

- Investing in nonprofits is an investment in community resilience, filling critical service gaps and addressing systemic inequities.

02

Funding Realities: A Call for Stability: Nonprofits are lifelines for communities, but they cannot thrive on unstable and restrictive funding. Policymakers must ensure reliable, flexible funding streams to sustain vital services.

Why it matters:

- Government funding, while significant, often falls short of the full costs of service delivery. Without consistent state investment, nonprofits struggle to meet rising demand.

03

Supporting the Nonprofit Workforce: Nonprofit professionals are essential workers, yet many face financial and emotional strain. We must value and support these individuals who dedicate their lives to serving others.

Why it matters:

- Ensuring fair wages, professional development, and mental health resources for nonprofit employees is critical to sustaining high-quality services.

04

Addressing Public Misconceptions: Nonprofits are professional organizations, not just charities. They are innovative, efficient, and results-driven, with measurable societal impacts.

Why it matters:

- Nonprofits save taxpayer dollars by preventing crises, such as homelessness and incarceration, and delivering services more effectively than larger bureaucratic systems.

05

Collaboration for Community Impact: Nonprofits don't operate in isolation — they are vital parts of a broader system. When housing, education, and healthcare intersect, nonprofits provide the glue that holds communities together.

Why it matters:

- Stronger partnerships between nonprofits, governments, and private sectors are needed to address interconnected challenges and build a thriving society.

06

The Power of Prevention: Nonprofits lead the way in prevention, reducing future costs and creating healthier, more equitable communities.

Why it matters:

- Investments in prevention-focused services — like early childhood education, healthcare access, and workforce development — yield significant long-term returns.

07

Amplifying Stories of Impact: Every success story is a testament to the transformative power of nonprofit work. Sharing these stories builds trust and showcases the real-world value of these organizations.

Why it matters:

- Highlighting personal journeys — like a youth finding stable housing or a family accessing healthcare — makes the case for sustained public and private investment.

08

Demanding Systemic Change: Nonprofits work on the front lines, but systemic problems require systemic solutions. Policymakers must listen to nonprofits' insights and prioritize their needs in decision-making.

Why it matters:

- Advocacy isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. Nonprofits need dedicated funding to push for policies that align with their missions and create lasting change.

We'd like to thank all of the leaders from the Members in our MACC network who contributed their voices and thought leadership to this document.

We thank you for your continued support and collaboration in your network's advocacy efforts.

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