OUPI Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar Community Engaged Research Project

Building capacity and collaboration of nonprofits in times of crisis: the study of city of Pontiac, MI

(March – June 2023)

Results

August 2023

Prepared by: Sungeun Kim, Ph.D.

Dept. of Political Science & MPA Program

Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan 48309

Email: skim4@oakland.edu

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

This report summarizes data collected from a community survey conducted in Pontiac between March and June 2023 as part of a project by the OU-Pontiac Initiative Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar. The pillar, consisting of leaders of nonprofit organizations, a representative of the city of Pontiac, and faculty and administrators from Oakland University, works to support nonprofit organizations through collaboration and resource sharing. This report provides the results of the survey and guidance to the pillar to promote collaboration between nonprofits, local government, and the University, and support nonprofits to build their capacity.

This 15-20 minute, voluntary community survey was developed and conducted by Dr. Sungeun Kim with guidance from the Nonprofit and Neighborhood Pillar leadership and was reviewed by community leaders. The survey was conducted primarily online using Qualtrics. A limited number of in-person surveys were also conducted with the pillar via in-person meetings (coffee chat meetings). A total of 35 respondents started the survey, and 24 respondents from 29 organizations completed it. The majority of respondents were executive directors (55%), with program managers and board members making up 17% for each. All the participating organizations are 501c (3) organizations.

The survey asked for (1) general information about the participating organizations including their racial diversity, (2) their expectation for the pillar in the nonprofit community, (3) the impact of COVID-19, and (4) expectation from collaboration with other nonprofits, local government, and OU, and (5) the current collaborative relationships among nonprofits in Pontiac.

Most respondents (85%) had heard about the OUPI, and 74% were familiar with the pillar. The respondents expect the pillar to promote collaboration and provide regular informal networking opportunities in the community. They also want the pillar to provide seminars and training and help nonprofits to build capacity. Regarding the impact of COVID-19, the majority of organizations (67%) have experienced program disruption, but its impact seems to be not the same for all organizations. 53% (17) of respondents experienced increased budget after the pandemic, while 25% (8) experienced a decrease in their budget, and 33% (11) had to terminate some of their operations. Among the varied resources, nonprofits experienced a significant decrease in private donations and volunteers. The biggest challenges that nonprofits experienced were disruption in program service provision, volunteer management, and funding and HR management. The most frequently mentioned support expected from the pillar is promoting collaboration, sharing information, connecting with student volunteers and providing seminars and training.

Based on the results and the data analysis, this report provides some recommendations for the nonprofits and the pillar. First of all, nonprofit organizations should diversify their revenue for stable program provision during normal and uncertain times. Also, nonprofits should increase board involvement, since boards are critical resources for funding development, strategy and planning, and public relations. Second, the pillar should keep promoting collaboration by holding a monthly coffee chat meeting. Also, the pillar can provide regular seminars or training on timely issues to assist nonprofits' capacity building in financial, HR, volunteer management.

II. Purpose & Background

The goal of this survey is to better understand the impact of the pandemic on the nonprofit sector in Pontiac, the support nonprofit organizations have been in need of since the pandemic, and collaborative relationships among organizations. Then, the Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar committee would like to learn what the community can do together to mitigate the long-term impact of the pandemic and help them to build capacity and promote collaboration among nonprofits, local governments, and the University.

The city of Pontiac is a diverse rust belt city in central Oakland County, located 20 miles north of Detroit, Michigan. Its population grew rapidly with the expansion of the automobile industry in the city and its surrounding area. However, Pontiac has become significantly deindustrialized due to the decline of this industry, and has lost tax revenue as automobile plants have closed and residents have left the city. While Oakland County is one of Michigan's wealthiest counties, Pontiac is one of Michigan's impoverished cities. Poverty rates in Pontiac are 3.5 times higher than Oakland County and its Median house income is less than a half (42%) of median house income of Oakland County (table 1).

Despite the economic hardship in the city, nonprofits have been resilient in serving the community. However, they have struggled with a lack of resources and support, preventing them from getting together and working collaboratively. There has been lack of trust and communication among nonprofits, between nonprofits and government, and between nonprofits and the university. Since the OU-Pontiac Initiative has been established to promote civic engagement in the community, one of its six pillars, the Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar, has tried to work with nonprofit organizations to share information and promote collaboration. This survey was initiated by Pillar leaders as a tool to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the nonprofit community, the support they need, and what the community can do to build capacity of nonprofits and promote collaboration.

Table 1. Demographics of Pontiac (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022)

Items	Oakland County	Pontiac city
Population	1,269,431	61,854
Race		
White, not Hispanic or Latino	70.4%	20.5%
Black or African American	13.9%	47.4%
Hispanic or Latino	4.8%	20.5%
Asian	8.6%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0%	0%
Median household income	$86,275	$36,214
Persons in poverty	7.8%	27.7%
Foreign-born person	13%	9.3%

III. Methodology

Dr. Sungeun Kim has developed, piloted, and revised the survey protocol with guidance from the Nonprofit and Neighborhood Pillar committee and nonprofit leaders (Appendix 6). The survey was approved by the Oakland University Institutional Review Board prior to implementation (IRB-FY2023-171). Survey questions were developed to capture (1) general organizational information, (2) the expected roles of the OU-Pontiac Initiative Nonprofits and Neighborhoods pillar in the community, (3) the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofits, and (4) collaborative relationships.

A total of 97 human service nonprofit organizations were identified. There was a two-stage process to identify the human service nonprofit organizations in Pontiac. In the first stage, active human service nonprofit organizations located in Pontiac that submitted IRS 990 forms for the last three years were identified through guidestar.org. Also, small community-based nonprofit organizations whose annual revenue fall below the threshold for IRS reporting were identified through the local government, the city of Pontiac, OLHSA, and the pillar's contact information. In the second stage, the Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar Committee made additions to the original list. The committee members, composed of nonprofit leaders from the community, were asked to add or remove organizations that provide human services in Pontiac. After reviewing the list with them, three organizations were included. All of the 97 nonprofits were 501c(3) organizations.

Before distributing the survey questions to 97 identified nonprofits, we carried out a pilot test of the survey questionnaire with eight organizations, from January 2022 to April 2022. After this pilot study the questionnaire was modified and finalized. Then an online survey (Qualtrics) was sent to executive directors and managers of the identified nonprofit organizations. The survey was conducted between March 2023 and the end of June 2023. After sending out the first email, we followed up every two weeks from March to the end of May. The response rates are shown in table 2:

Table 2. Survey response rate

|	Identified Nonprofits	Started/Completed	**Response rate (completed)**
Via Qualtrics (in-person paper)	97	35/24 (2)	**25.5%**

IV. Survey Results

A. General Information of participating organization

Out of the 35 respondents who started the survey, 29 from 24 different organizations completed it. This report includes all the responses from the 35 respondents, since they completed the first part of the survey, which concerns the expected roles of the OU-PI Nonprofit Neighborhood Pillar in the community and the impact of the pandemic. There are two organizations that have multiple responses. The multiple responses about organizational information from the same organization were aggregated as a mean value. As figure 1 shows, the majority of respondents are executive directors (55%), followed by program managers (17%), and board members (17%). Of the 24 organizations, 21 (72%) organizations provide services in Oakland County, 8 (27.5%) in Wayne County, and 5 (17.2%) in Macomb County (figure 2).

Figure 1. Position of respondents (n=30)

Figure 2. Geographic locations that your organization serves (n=29)
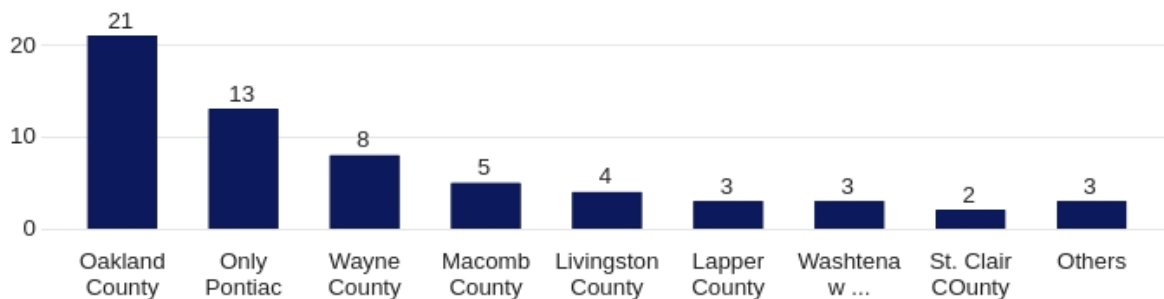
Note: Other locations include Flint, Lansing, Saginaw, Remote services across U.S.

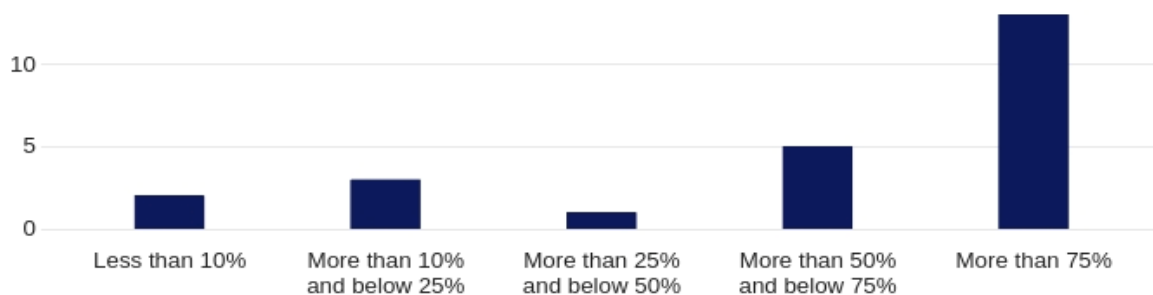OUPI Nonprofit and Neighborhoods Pillar Community Survey Project

Participating organizations have about 3 different budget sources on average among seven budget sources which include government grant or contract, private donation, foundation support, corporate contributions, membership dues, fee-for-service, and others (table 3). They mostly rely on three budget sources which are private donation (43%), government grants (22.6%), and foundation support (16.6%). The average annual income of participating organizations is 2.3 million USD, but the median income is 225 thousand USD, because of some outliers. The average organizational age is 25, with one outlier (150 years), and the median age is 10.5 years. These organizations have 15.6 employees on average, and 75% (18) participating organizations indicated that more than 50% of their employee have professional certificates, credentials, or degrees (figure 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of participating organizations (n=24)

Organizational Characteristics	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD
Annual income (thousand USD)	$2,298	$225	$0	$40,000	$8,378
Number of funding sources	2.96	3.5	0	5	1.52
Government funding (%)	22.6%	10%	0%	97%	28%
Foundation support (%)	16.6%	9%	0%	67%	20.3%
Fee-for-service (%)	2.3%	0	0	41%	8.5%
Private donation (%)	43%	40%	0	100%	35.6%
Corporate contribution (%)	5.2%	0	0	24%	7.6%
Membership fee	3%	0	0	50%	10.4%
Number of Full-time employee	15.6	2	0	250	51.3
Organizational age	25	10.5	2	150	31.9

Note: the multiple responses from the same organization were aggregated as a mean value and the organizational financial information was double checked with IRS 990 form when available.

Figure 3. Employee with professional certificate, credential, or degree (n=24)

B. Expectation for the OU-Pontiac Initiative and Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar

This part of the survey shows how familiar respondents are with the OU-Pontiac Initiative and Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar, and what they expect from the pillar in the community. As figure 4 shows, 85% (29) of respondents had heard of the OU-Pontiac Initiative before, while 15% (5) of the organizations had never heard of it. 74% (25) of the respondents were 'strongly' or 'somewhat familiar' with the pillar, while 18% (6) were 'strongly' or 'somewhat unfamiliar' with the pillar (figure 5). As shown in figure 6, those who know of the pillar had heard about it through local nonprofit leaders and staff (32%), seminars or events on OU campus (16%), or their colleagues or friends (16%).

The respondents indicated that the pillar's three most important roles are 1) sharing collaboration opportunities, 2) providing grant application opportunities, and 3) promoting networks through regular in-person meetings (Table 4). As figure 7 shows, the most interesting topics for the seminar or training are (1) grant writing (69%), (2) forming collaborations (57%), (3) fundraising strategies (43%), and (4) board effectiveness training (43%). Lastly, the support they expect from the pillar in forming and maintaining collaborations is providing networking opportunities (74%), sharing good practice (60%), and inviting experts who give advice (57%) (figure 8).

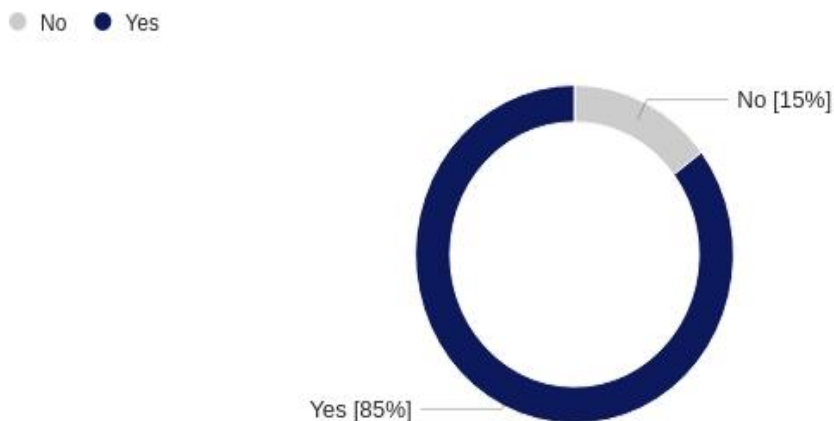**Figure 4. Have you heard of the OU-Pontiac Initiative? (n=34)**

Figure 5. Familiarity with the OU-Pontiac Initiative Nonprofit and Neighborhood pillar (n=34)
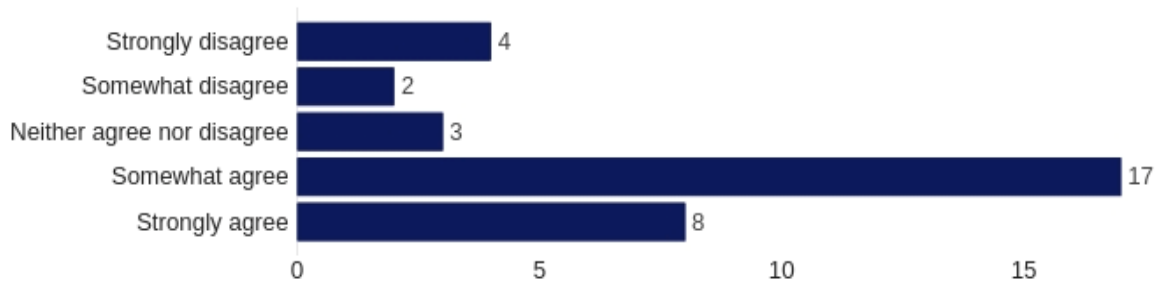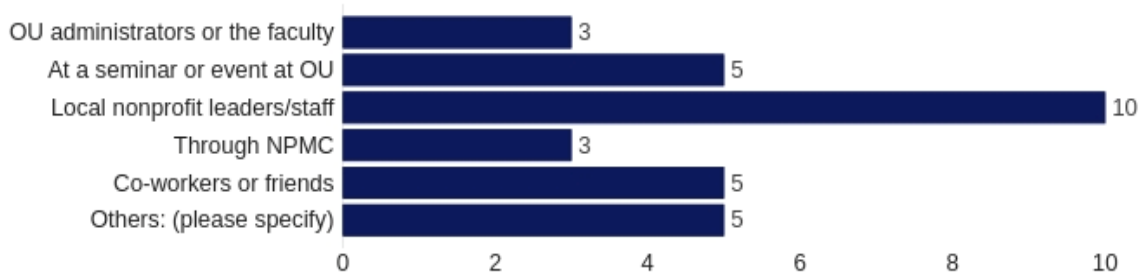

Figure 6. I heard about the pillar through … (n=31)

Note: Others include forwarded email and City of Pontiac

Table 4. The pillar's important roles in the community (n=35)

Pillar's roles	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Sharing collaboration opportunity	4.68	2	5	0.63
Providing grant application opportunity	4.53	1	5	0.85
Promoting networks (e.g., regular in-person meeting)	4.51	1	5	0.81
Regular information sharing about community development, service opportunity, recruitment, events, etc.	4.40	2	5	0.76
Providing education and training seminars (e.g., grant writing, fundraising strategy)	4.31	2	5	0.98
Providing an opportunity for student volunteers or interns	4.26	2	5	1.02

Figure 7. Training or seminars that are most interesting (n=35)
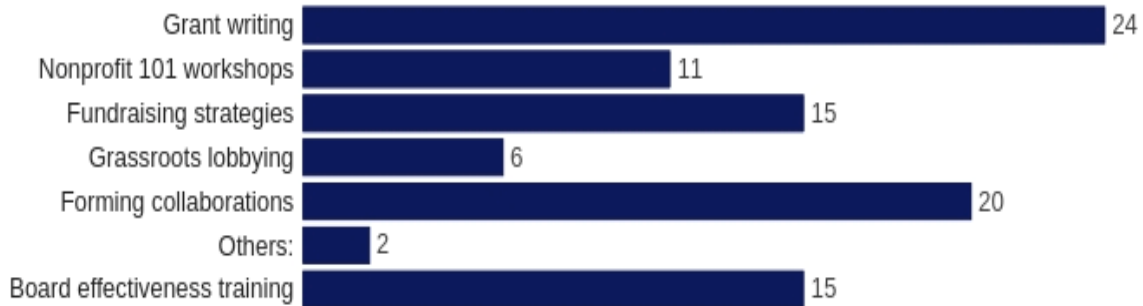
Others: academic research opportunities regarding Pontiac; Fundraising, Grassroots lobbying, Collaborations, and Board effectiveness

Figure 8. Support you expect from the pillar in forming and maintaining collaborations (n=35)

Others: student intern involvement; all of the above

C. Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofit in Pontiac

This part of the results shows the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofit organizations in Pontiac. First of all, we asked how the pandemic affected nonprofits' financial resources. 53% (17) of respondents experienced an increased budget at their organizations, while 25% (8) respondents experienced a decrease in their budget after COVID-19. The impact of the pandemic is not the same for different financial sources. For example, 66.7% (22) and 70% (23) of respondents reported a somewhat or large decrease in their private donations and volunteers respectively, whereas 63.6% (21) reported a somewhat or large increase in government funding.

Figure 9. Budget changes after COVID-19 since 2020 (n= 32)

Figure 10. Decrease in resources since COVID-19 (n=33)
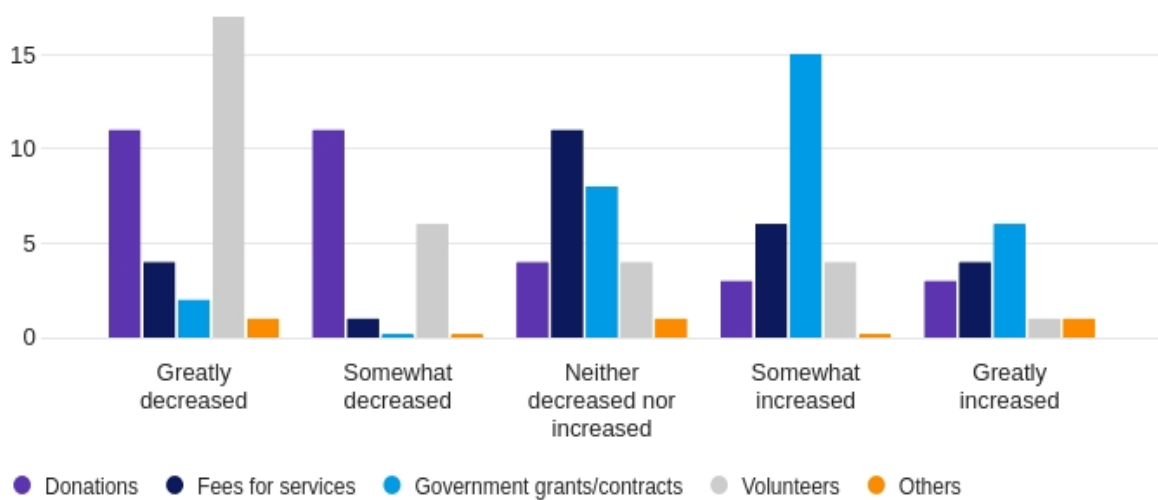
Secondly, we asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their programs and service provision. The majority of organizations (67%) experienced 'somewhat more' or 'to a greater extent than usual' disruption in service/program provision. However, the extent of the disruption was not huge. One third of them (11) had to stop some of their operations, but 41% (7) of them stopped less than 10% of their services and programs; while only 2 (10%) of respondents reported 50-75% of program/service discontinuance.

Figure 11. The disruptions of service/program provision since COVID-19 (n=33)

To a greater extent than usual	15
Somewhat more frequently than ...	7
Same as we always do	3
Somewhat less than usual	6
Much less than usual	2
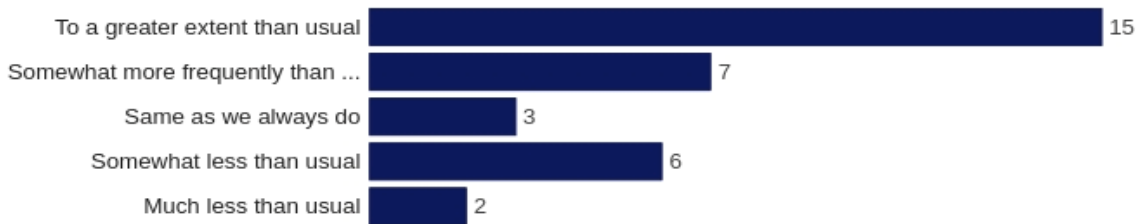
Figure 12. Has your organization stopped operating programs at any point since COVID-19? (n=33)

○ No ● Yes

Yes [33.33%, 11]

No [66.67%, 22]
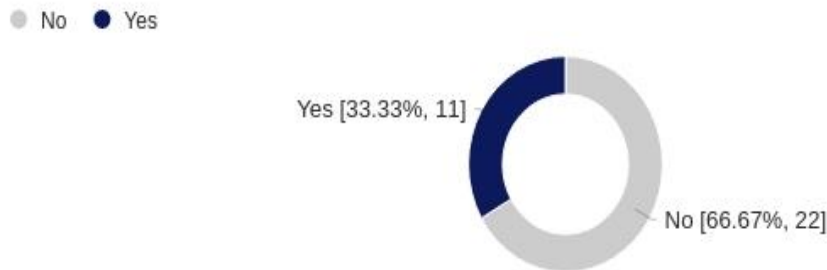
Figure 13. To what extent has your programs/service stooped operating? (n=17)

Less than 10%	7
More than 10% and below 25%	4
More than 25% and below 50%	4
More than 50% and below 75%	2
More than 75%	0

OUPI Nonprofit and Neighborhoods Pillar Community Survey Project
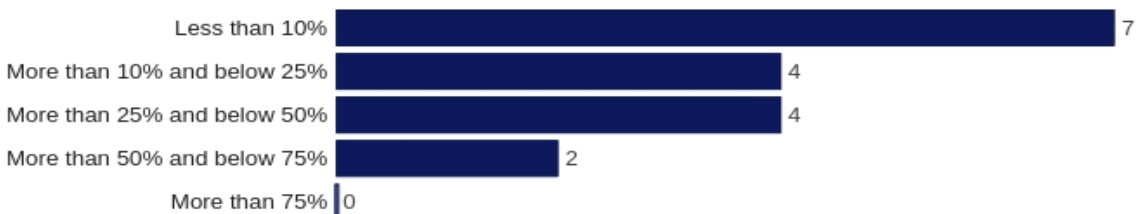
Lastly, we asked how organizations have achieved their goals since COVID-19. Somewhat surprisingly, 71% (17) of the organizations indicated that their clients and consumers were satisfied with the services provided, and 75% (18) reported that they have been successfully meeting their goals and objectives. While they reported 'somewhat successful' and 'successful' for most of their activities, their advocacy activities for the vulnerable population in the community have been reported as neutral.

Table 5. How successful your organization has been at meeting the following goals (n=24)

Goals	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Generally, clients and consumers are satisfied with the services provided	4.16	2	5	0.92
Overall, meeting organizational goals and objectives	4.04	2	5	0.85
The number of programs and services offered for the vulnerable population has increased	3.92	2	5	1.02
The quality of service offered for the vulnerable population has improved	3.92	2	5	1.06
The majority of clients (customers) we served experienced a marked improvement as a result of the services provided	3.91	2	5	1.02
Increased community relations and outreach to better serve the vulnerable population	3.75	2	5	0.74
The advocacy activities for the vulnerable population in the community have increased	3.67	2	5	1.01

D. Impact of COVID-19: Challenges and supports

This part of the results shows the biggest challenges nonprofit organizations have experienced and the support they have been in need of since the pandemic. Most challenges concern (1) program/service provision, (2) resources (volunteers, funding, and HR) management, and (3) post-pandemic management. The respondents also reported that the pillar can promote collaboration, share grant information, and provide student volunteers and internship opportunities as well as training and seminars for important topics and issues. When we asked what support they have been in need of since the pandemic, 67% (22) of respondents reported reevaluating fundraising strategies, 64% (21) reported volunteer recruitment and management, and 55% (18) reported opportunities for collaboration. The most frequently mentioned support needs are collaboration, grant opportunities, and volunteer management.

The following provides a summary of the challenges nonprofits experienced and the support they have expected from pillars since the pandemic.

Biggest challenges since COVID-19:

- Program/service provision and management
    - Difficult to figure out what is available, what kind service the community needs, and who need our service
    - How to best communicate with the community about what we can offer
    - Need to rethink the services we provide and the method we deliver them
    - Community needs increased, but the services/programs are limited
    - Getting the community back involved with in-person events and social outing after the pandemic
- Volunteer management
    - Volunteering is down significantly during the pandemic
    - Reengaging volunteers to be in person after the pandemic
- Funding
    - Decrease in donation but lack of interaction with potential funders
    - Many funders have moved away with the pandemic ending while there is still a need for crisis assistance
    - Need additional funding
        - gap funding to help those in need of immediate services
        - capacity building funding for an organization
- HR management
    - Maintain healthy staff and volunteers by limiting our face to face contact with clients during the pandemic
    - Staff burnout
    - Funding for needed staff is inadequate
- Post pandemic
    - Funding and donations have dropped and cost have risen

Expected pillar's roles in the community during the challenging time:

- Promoting collaboration
  - Provide space to meeting and encourage collaboration
  - Share opportunities for training/funding/partnering
  - Continued collaboration will decrease in service duplication
  - Create networking/connections
  - Site visit – get to know each other better
  - Collaboration with OU - Involvement faculty and student project
- Sharing grant information
  - Being a resource for grant information
  - Get capacity building funding for organizations
- Providing student volunteer and internship
  - Provide students to assist with local organizations
- Providing seminars and training
  - Bring in expert speakers to help us all deal with real time issues
  - Volunteer and staff development
  - Help with grants writing
  - Provide information about nonprofit management and growth (sustain growth and increase membership)
  - Offer support to front line staff in coaching sessions and provide insight into the technical assistance

Table 6. Supports that organizations have been in need (n=33)

Supports	
Reevaluating fundraising strategies	**22**
Volunteer recruitment and management	**21**
Opportunities for collaboration with other nonprofits	**18**
Technical support	13
Wellness and self-care for myself and/or team	13
Opportunities for collaboration with state/local governments	13
Coaching sessions for leading in ambiguity	11
Financial scenario planning	8
Guidance for our board of directors	8
Human resource management during the pandemic	8

Others: reevaluation of our services and how we provide them

E. Expectation for Collaboration

Figure 14. Types of collaboration activities your organization seeks (n=29)
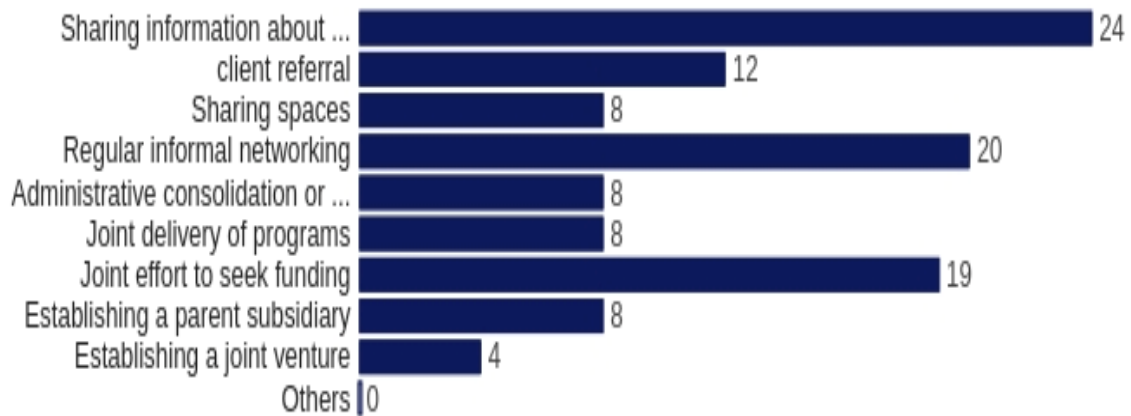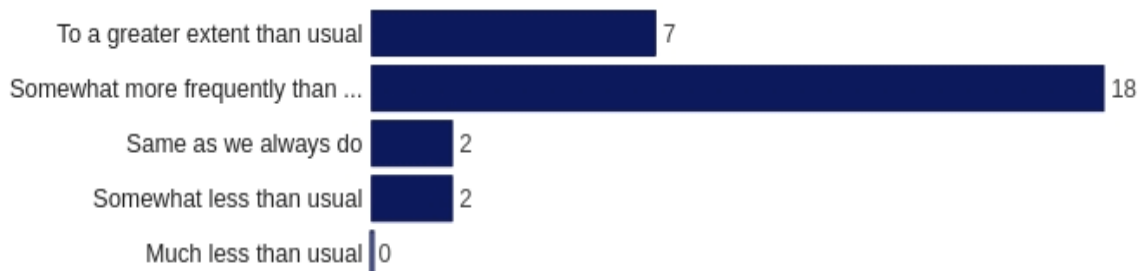
Figure 15. Has your organization increased collaboration in delivering services since COVID-19? (n=29)

Participants were also asked what their organizations seek from collaboration with other nonprofit organizations, local governments, and the OU. With regards to collaboration with nonprofit organizations, 83% (24) of respondents reported that they looked for accessing and/or securing monetary resources, 76% (22) wanted to improve service delivery and its impact, and 72% (21) wanted to better advocate for their clients (Table 7).

In terms of collaboration with local governments, 69% (20) of respondents indicated that they wanted to access and/or secure monetary resources, while 52% (15) looked for accessing and/or securing non-monetary resources, advocating for clients, and acquiring or improving organizational reputation (Table 8).

Similarly, with regards to collaboration with the OU, the majority of respondents indicated that they wanted to access non-monetary resources (79%), monetary resources (72%), and improve organizational learning and operation (62%) (Table 9).

The participants indicated that accessing monetary and non-monetary resources are the primary goals of collaboration with all partners, but they looked for somewhat different goals with different partners. They looked for improving service delivery and advocacy for clients when in collaboration with other nonprofits, while they wanted to improve their reputation through collaboration with local governments, and improve organizational learning and operation through collaboration with the OU.

Table 7. What your organization seeks from collaboration <u>with other nonprofits</u> (n=28)

Goals	Number of org.	Percent (%)
Access and/or secure monetary resource (e.g., government grants, private donation, or foundation grants)	24	83%
Improve service delivery and its impact	22	76%
Better advocate for the clients your organization serves	21	72%
Access and/or secure non-monetary resources (e.g., human resources, expertise, information, technological support, etc.)	19	66%
Improve organizational learning and operation	17	59%
Acquire or improve organizational reputation	16	55%
Cope with funders' requirements	15	52%

**Table 8. What your organization seeks from collaboration <u>with local government (n=28)</u>**

Goals	Number of org.	Percent (%)
Access and/or secure monetary resource (e.g., government grants, private donation, or foundation grants)	20	69%
Access and/or secure non-monetary resources (e.g., human resources, expertise, information, technological support, etc.)	15	52%
Better advocate for the clients your organization serves	15	52%
Acquire or improve organizational reputation	15	52%
Improve service delivery and its impact	13	45%
Cope with funders' requirements	9	31%
Improve organizational learning and operation	8	28%

Table 9. What your organization seeks from collaboration <u>with OU (n=28)</u>

Goals	Number of org.	Percent (%)
Access and/or secure non-monetary resources (e.g., human resources, expertise, information, technological support, etc.)	23	79%
Access and/or secure monetary resource (e.g., government grants, private donation, or foundation grants)	21	72%
Improve organizational learning and operation	18	62%
Acquire or improve organizational reputation	16	55%
Improve service delivery and its impact	14	48%
Better advocate for the clients your organization serves	13	45%
Cope with funders' requirements	12	41%

Participating respondents were asked if collaboration has become more necessary since the pandemic. 93% (26) of respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat strongly agree' that collaboration with nonprofits has become more necessary. 86% (24) and 68% (19) 'strongly' or 'somewhat strongly agree' that collaboration with local governments and the OU has become more necessary, respectively.

Figure 16. Has collaboration become more necessary since COVIVD-19? (n=28)
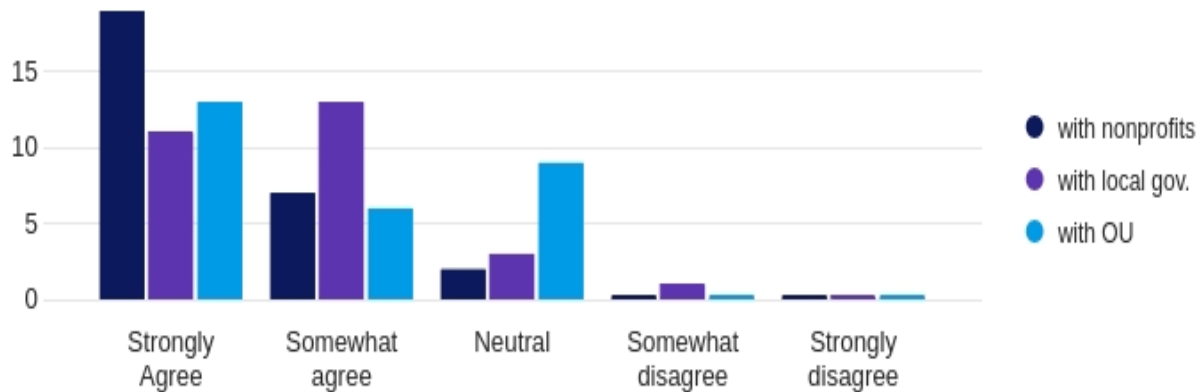
The survey then asked why collaboration has become more necessary since COVID-19 by means of open questions. The most frequently mentioned reason was effective service provision for the community. Because of increased needs and urgency in the community, the breakdown of communication between service providers and clients and among nonprofits, and increased uncertainty due to the pandemic, nonprofits need more collaboration in delivering services. Another major reason is improving organizations' effectiveness and sustainability during a time of uncertainty and a fast-changing environment.

Why collaboration became more necessary since COVID-19?

- Service provision for the community
  - High quality program with less duplication
  - Service provision to greater client base (client referral)
  - Need of team effort to accomplish things
  - Quick response to the community needs
  - COVID money is no longer available but the need still persists
  - COVID changed the world and people are in more dire need of help
  - Breakdown in communication

- Mission achievement under uncertainty
  - o Necessary to work with others with similar missions to provide services that alleviate the consequences the pandemic has imposed on our community
- Improve organizational effectiveness and sustainability
  - o More effective together
  - o Shifting consumer dynamics, we must pivot and adapt to survive
  - o *"Pontiac has previously operated in silos and it is necessary to work together. There are resources, but not if we are all trying to do the same thing for the same group of people"*
- Competition over resources
  - o Significant "competition" for grants/resources

While collaboration has become more necessary, about 46% (14) of respondents reported that they have experienced more challenges in forming and maintaining collaboration activities since COVID-19. The survey asked what has prevented collaboration with different partners. "lack of communication or information" and "lack of trust" are the two most important barriers to collaboration with all partners. "competition over resources (e.g., grants or HR)," "social distancing due to COVID-19," "lack of networking opportunity" are other important obstacles for collaboration here.

Figure 17. Has your organization experienced more challenges in forming and maintaining collaboration activities since COVID-19? (n=30)
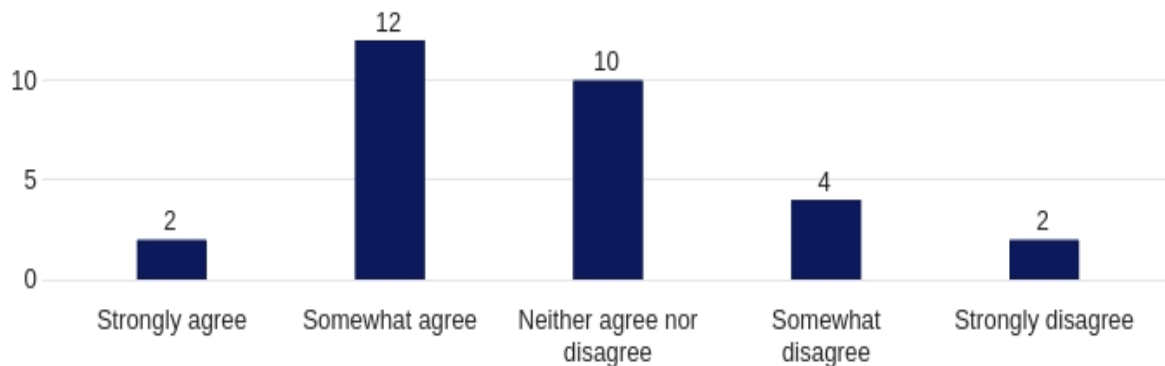
Table 10. **What prevented your organization from collaborating with nonprofits (n=30)**

Prevention	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Lack of communication or information	2.31	1	5	1.29
Lack of trust	2.77	1	5	1.20
Competition over resources (e.g., grants or HR)	2.80	1	5	1.28
Social distancing due to COVID-19	2.83	1	5	1.34
Lack of internal support (e.g., board members or staff)	2.83	1	5	1.21
Lack of networking opportunity in the community	2.93	1	5	1.29
Lack of information of other nonprofits	2.97	1	5	1.22
Possibility of unintended mission drift	3.07	1	5	1.22
Competition over clients	3.80	2	5	1.29
Possibility of losing autonomy	3.86	1	5	1.5

Note: Extremely important is 1, not at all important is 5

Table 11. **What prevented your organization from collaborating <u>with local government</u> since COVID-19? (n=29)**

Prevention	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Lack of communication or information	2.54	1	5	1.38
Lack of trust	2.86	1	5	1.22
Competition over resources (e.g., grants or HR)	2.80	1	5	1.28
Social distancing due to COVID-19	3.00	1	5	1.23
Lack of networking opportunity	3.00	1	5	1.36
Possibility of unintended mission drift	3.14	1	5	1.43
Lack of internal support (e.g., board members or staff)	3.32	1	5	1.26
Lack of information	3.50	1	5	1.27
Possibility of losing autonomy	3.57	1	5	1.26
Competition over clients	3.68	1	5	1.25

Note: Extremely important is 1, not at all important is 5

Table 12. **What prevented your organization from collaborating <u>with OU?</u> (n=27)**

| Prevention	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Lack of communication or information	3.19	1	5	1.25
Possibility of unintended mission drift	3.41	1	5	1.10
Lack of trust	3.52	1	5	1.20
Lack of networking opportunity in the community	3.56	1	5	1.20
Lack of information	3.59	1	5	1.16
Social distancing due to COVID-19	3.67	1	5	1.12
Lack of internal support (e.g., board members or staff)	3.74	1	5	1.24
Competition over resources (e.g., grants or HR)	3.78	1	5	1.23
Possibility of losing autonomy	3.85	2	5	1.08
Competition over clients	4.07	2	5	1.05

Note: Extremely important is 1, not at all important is 5

F. Current collaborative relationships between organizations

The participating organizations reported their collaborative relationships with other nonprofits in Pontiac. The visual diagram (figure 18) shows the current relationships between 24 nonprofits that have completed the survey. Each note in the diagram represents an organization. 92% (22) participating organizations reported that they were connected to at least one of the organizations. Some organizations are located in the center in the diagram meaning that they have more connections with other organizations. The following organizations have more connections with other organizations:

- #6 - Community foundation
- #5 -Micah 6
- #7 - Lighthouse
- #4 - Oakland Sheriff
- #15 -The Art Experience Inc.
- #13 - Accent Pontiac
- #11 -OLHSA
- #1 - Center for success
- #19 -Ecommunity outreach

Figure 18. Collaborative relationships between nonprofits

OUPI Nonprofit and Neighborhoods Pillar Community Survey Project
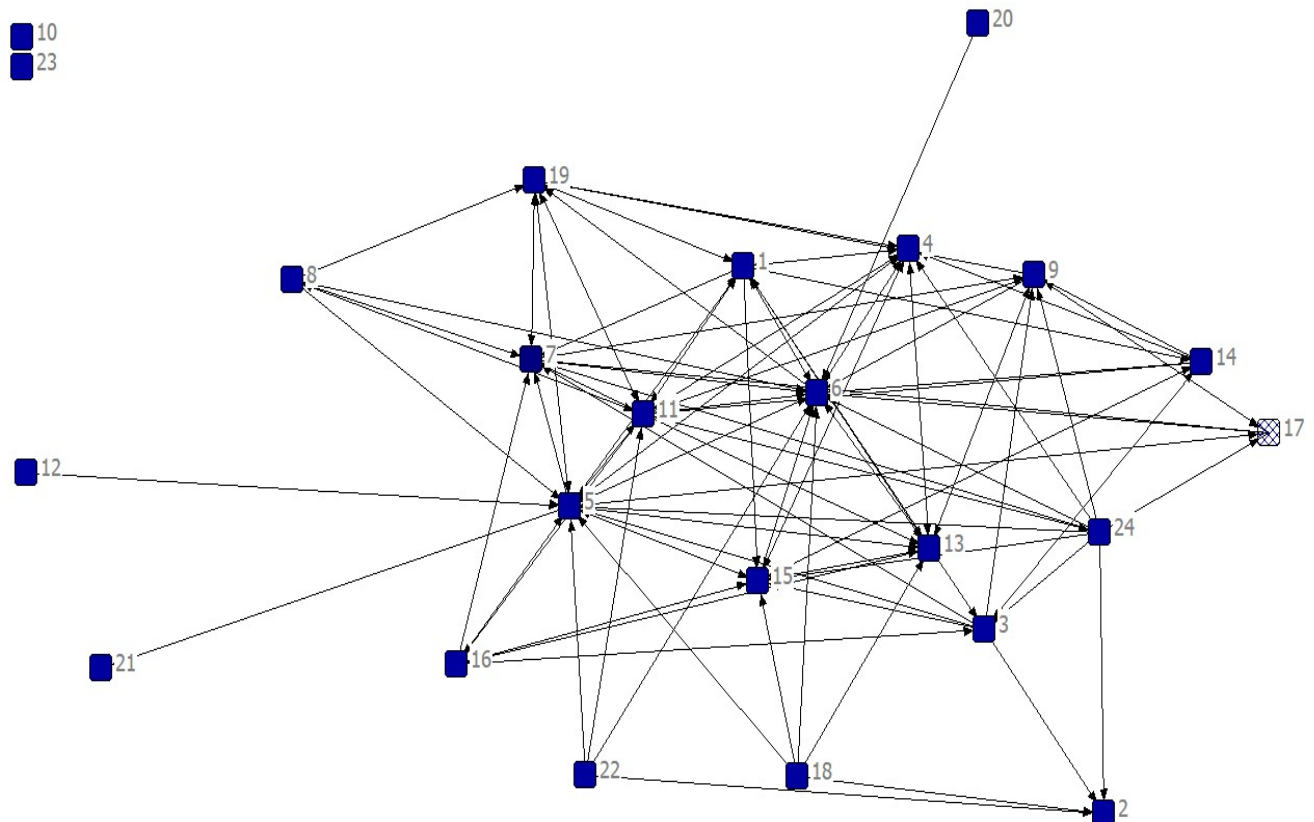
G. Diversity of board, staff, and volunteers

On average, the participating respondents have 9.5 board members, with a range of 4 to 24. Their BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) rate is 46%, with a range from 0% to 100%, which means 46% of the participating organizations' board members are people of color. More specifically, these organizations have five white and 3.38 black board members on average. However, they have less than one (0.63) Hispanic or Latino board member on average, and no Asian and Indigenous, Native Americans, or Alaskan Natives as board members. Also, the number of male and female of executive directors of participating organizations is roughly equal, though female hold a slight lead with 53.85%. There is no executive director who is Latino or Hispanic. Considering the demographics of the city, the Hispanic and Asian population is not well represented in organizational leadership among participating organizations. Interestingly, the BIPOC rates for employees, volunteers, and executive directors are very similar, being 40%, 41%, and 38% respectively.

Table 13. Racial and ethnicity of the leadership (n=24)

	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Number of Board Members	9.5	4	24	5.35
Number of full-time employees	15.6	0	250	51.27
Number of volunteers (month)	29	0	200	46.64
Employee BIPOC	0.40	0	0.88	0.38
Board BIPOC	0.46	0	1	0.34
Volunteer BIPOC	0.41	0	0.88	0.38
CEO BIPOC	0.38	0	1	0.49
CEO gender	0.65	0	1	0.49

Table 14. Board racial diversity distribution (n=24)

Board Race	Mean	Min	Max	SD
White	5	0	10	3.39
Black/African American	3.38	1	10	2.86
Latino or Hispanic	0.63	1	3	0.88
Asian/Asian American	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.04	0	1	0
Indigenous, Native American, or Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0
Others	0.29	0	4	0.99

Figure 19. Executive gender

Man Woman

Woman [53.85%] Man [46.15%]
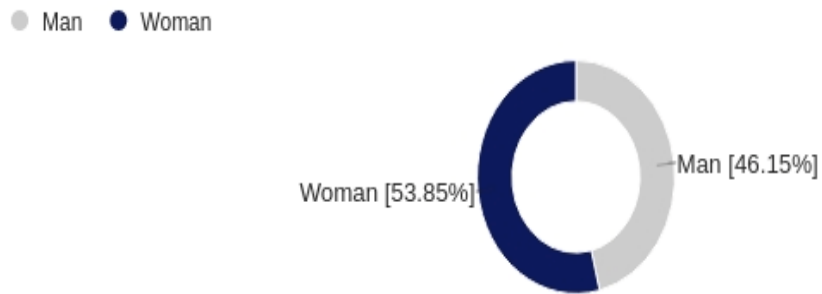
V. Recommendations

The survey study provides information about the organizational characteristics of the participating nonprofit organizations in Pontiac, the impact of COVID-19 on them, and the expected roles of the OU-Pontiac Nonprofit and Neighborhood Pillar in the community. Based on the survey results, there are some recommendations for the participating nonprofit organizations and the pillar.

Recommendations to individual nonprofits:

Since nonprofits are embedded in larger societal systems and rely heavily on external funding, they are greatly affected by dynamic environmental conditions such as the pandemic, government policy, and economic conditions. While COVID-19 greatly affected all nonprofit organizations across the country from early 2020, its impact seems to be non-uniform. The survey results indicate that about two thirds (67%) of the respondents experienced 'somewhat more' or 'to a greater extent than usual' disruption in service provision, whereas 24% (8) of the respondents experienced 'much less' or 'somewhat less' than usual disruption in program and service provision. Also, 24% (8) of the respondents experienced a decrease in budget, and 33% (11) had to terminate operations, but more than half of the participating nonprofits (17) experienced an increase in budget due to emergency government funding. This discrepancy in the impact of the pandemic on nonprofit organizations provides us with some recommendations.

- Revenue diversification

Revenue diversification is an important measure that can predict nonprofits' financial health and performance (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Chang & Tuckman, 1994; Kim, 2017). It reduces revenue volatility and increases organizational sustainability when there is a decline in any one source (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Chang & Tuckman, 1994). It also helps nonprofits get back to operation when they experience a financial shock such as an economic downturn or the loss of a major donor (Lu et al., 2019). The results of this study also indicates that the pandemic particularly decreased private donations. Thus, participating organizations that were heavily reliant on private donations experienced severe budget shortages, which may have affected program provision and operation. The results show that revenue diversification is negative relationship with budget decrease (Appendix 5). Based on these results, it is strongly recommended that nonprofits assess their financial management and improve their revenue diversification.

- Board involvement

Nonprofits need to increase board involvement. Nonprofits with small annual incomes and a small number of employees should be especially able to utilize their boards. Boards are pivotal resources for nonprofits, and they should fulfill their roles and responsibilities. As a governing body, they should set the organization's mission and purpose, provide proper financial oversight, ensure adequate resources, maintain organizational accountability, and ensure effective organizational planning (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). In addition, they are responsible for funding development, public relations, providing guidance and expertise, facilitating grants, and

public relations (Brown & Guo, 2010). The survey results show that board size is negatively correlated with budget decrease and positively correlated with annual income (Appendix 5). Executive directors of small nonprofits often struggle to manage everything by themselves if they do not have sufficient staffing or resources. Board effectiveness assessment is another important board responsibility. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that nonprofits conduct board assessment, improve their effectiveness, and work closely with executive directors.

Recommendations to the Nonprofit and Neighborhood Pillar:

The Nonprofit and Neighborhood Pillar focuses on promoting collaboration and building capacity for nonprofits in Pontiac. The survey results provide some useful information about what kind of support nonprofits have been in need, and what they expect from the pillar.

- Promoting collaboration

The respondents indicated that promoting collaboration is the pillar's most important role, and that they expect the pillar to play the role of a bridge among nonprofits, between nonprofits and the government, and between nonprofits and the University. About 83% of the respondents chose "sharing collaboration opportunity" as an important role of the pillar, and 70% chose "Promoting networks (e.g., coordinating regular in-person meetings)". The following are some respondents' comments on why collaboration is so important:

> *"Provides support in bringing us together in order to collaborate more. For years nonprofits have silod themselves – we need to get out of these silos"*

> *"Creates space for meeting and collaborating regularly, sharing opportunities for training/funding/partnering"*

> *"I really like the networking potential and the sharing of resources/funding opportunities"*

> *"To ensure less duplication of services while also ensuring high-quality programming"*

What participating organizations want from collaboration is very clear. They seek to (1) access and/or secure more resources through collaboration (collaboration with all partners), (2) improve service delivery and its impact (collaboration with other nonprofits), (3) better advocate for clients (collaboration with nonprofits and governments), (4) improve organizational learning and operation (collaboration with OU), and (5) improve organizational reputation (collaboration with governments). However, respondents reported that lack of trust and lack of communication or information have prevented them from building collaboration in the community. The potential competition over clients or resources were not considered as a critical obstacle.

As an attempt to promote collaboration, the pillar has been holding a monthly coffee chat meeting to share information on community events, grant applications, and collaboration opportunities that have arisen since last winter. This regular meeting seems to be a good action plan for the pillar, helping them to meet community needs and expectations. By continuing this

regular networking, nonprofits can get to know each other better, build trust, and find opportunities for further collaboration.

- Capacity building for the nonprofit community

Another important role of the pillar that is mentioned by the respondents is helping nonprofits to build capacity. The participants are looking for seminars or training for various topics. Some of the topics they are most interested in are (1) grant writing, (2) forming collaborations, (3) fundraising strategies, and (4) board effectiveness training. Based on the survey results, I recommend that the pillar plans a regular (quarterly or semester) seminar or training event on a specific topic. The pillar can invite experts, consulting agents, or scholars to give advice on the topic. Also, the pillar can invite community leaders to share their good practice on various topics such as organizational collaboration, board-executive relationships, grassroots lobbying, or fundraising. These seminars and training sessions will especially help small nonprofits that do not have much resources or capacity. In this light, it is my recommendation that the pillar apply for a capacity building grant and hold regular seminars or training for the community.

- Connecting with students and faculty

In addition, nonprofits and the pillar can improve capacity by connecting with the OU faculty and students through community-engaged learning projects. Through such projects, students will able to increase their understanding of the community and contribute to local organizations by acting as volunteers. Such work would be beneficial to the community in the long-term because it promotes student civic engagement and their awareness of local nonprofits. According to previous studies in Pontiac, the community-engaged learning project increases students' desire to volunteer, understand their community, and donate to local nonprofits (Benz et al., 2020). Therefore, nonprofits should actively look for opportunities to participate in community-engaged learning projects and utilize the resources of OU. Such work would in turn build organizational capacity as well as improve student learning and foster a sense of connection between students and their community.

VI. Conclusion

This community survey relies mostly on self-reported data. Therefore, respondents may under- or over-report certain issues. Respondents' individual ability or expertise at assessing the impact of COVID-19 on their organizations may affect the accuracy of responses. However, since the majority of respondents are executive directors (54%), program managers (17%), and board members (17%), they should have a good enough understanding of their organizations and the impact of the pandemic. Also, organizations' financial information has been double-checked using the IRS 990 form.

This survey study was initiated by the OU-Pontiac Nonprofits and Neighborhoods Pillar to understand the general characteristics of organizations in Pontiac, nonprofits' expectations of the pillar, the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofits, and collaborative relationships. The survey shows that nonprofits were greatly affected by the pandemic in their program/service provision, but that the impact was not uniform. The pandemic significantly decreased the number of volunteers and the amount of private donations. Thus, nonprofit organizations that are heavily dependent on private donations were greatly affected by the pandemic. Also, the respondents expect the pillar to promote collaboration and to help them build capacity. While nonprofits seek collaboration with other nonprofits, the local government, and the University, lack of trust and communication have been preventing them from building collaborative relationships. Based on the results, this report provides recommendations for individual nonprofits and the pillar.

VII. Reference

Benz, T. A., Piskulich, J. P., Kim, S., Barry, M., & Havstad, J. C. (2020). Student Philanthropy and Community Engagement: A Program Evaluation. *Innovative Higher Education*, *45*(1), 17–33.

Brown, W. A., & Guo, C. (2010). Exploring the key roles for nonprofit boards. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *39*(3), 536–546.

Carroll, D. A., & Stater, K. J. (2009). Revenue diversification in nonprofit organizations: Does it lead to financial stability? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *19*(4), 947–966.

Chang, C. F., & Tuckman, H. P. (1994). Revenue diversification among non-profits. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *5*(3), 273–290.

Kim, M. (2017). The relationship of nonprofits' financial health to program outcomes: Empirical evidence from nonprofit arts organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *46*(3), 525–548.

Lu, J., Lin, W., & Wang, Q. (2019). Does a more diversified revenue structure lead to greater financial capacity and less vulnerability in nonprofit organizations? A bibliometric and meta-analysis. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *30*(3), 593–609.

Tschirhart, M., & Bielefeld, W. (2012). *Managing nonprofit organizations*. John Wiley & Sons.

VIII. Appendices

Appendix 1. The biggest challenge in providing programs and/or services after the pandemic

- Reengaging volunteers to be in person, and funding programs with increased budgets

- Creating an information signal of what is available, to those who need our service, that rises above the noise and distractions of all the information they are being bombarded with
- Getting programs back to full capacity participation
- Working in collaboration with other programs and entities
- Figuring out what people need and how to best communicate what we offer while making sure that is aligned with what our community needs
- The struggle to maintain healthy staff and volunteers by limiting our face to face contact with clients. It has resulted in my organization having to completely rethink the services we provide and the method at which we do so.
- The needs of the community increased but the services and programs are limited
- Costs and amount of volunteers. During the pandemic, donations were high, but post pandemic, everything has dropped and cost have risen
- Getting the community back involved with in person events and social outings after the pandemic as well as the willingness to donate to new initiatives
- There is still a need for crisis assistance but many funders have moved away from this with the pandemic ending. The people most of us serve are the last to recover from any crisis and often the supportive funds are pulled long before they have recovered.
- Transportation for our students to/from programming, Volunteers at events, filling vacant teaching positions
- Finding volunteers to support our program delivery model
- People have been changed, while remaining the same, if that makes sense. The broader, global state of affairs is vastly different to. I hope its that more people are awakened to the injustices in the world and trying to make sense of it and how to fit action into a new state of being. For us specifically, its been the fact that we kept busy while people were at home, and then when we could open up and folks started coming back to the studio, we had twice the amount of work to do, less emergency funding because the pandemic wasn't as immediate a threat anymore, and staff burnout.
- Volunteering is down significantly
- Funding for needed staff is inadequate
- Interns moved through their program here and are no longer available to us
- Funding
- Lost momentum of previous programming series or activities being canceled
- Funding, volunteers, staffing
- Was not able to open our door
- No interaction with potential funders

- Getting funds for victims and their families
- Funding
- COVID-19 grew our organization because we were focusing on the city of Pontiac, but much of the money was coming federal and state dollars with private donations. I know this is not the experience of many nonprofits in the Pontiac community, but it has been our situation.
- Funding is always a struggle. We have grown fast, but capacity building funding is necessary. We could use more capacity building funding.
- The need vs. the amount of staff
- During COVID it was about bring outside partners into the building to protect our guest sand staff. We are now opening up and working on getting community partners back into the shelter to provide more services for our guests
- Lack of safe & stable housing for our clients to access, gap funding to help those in need of immediate services (homeless to hotel stays interimly, utility bills paid, emergency funds)

Appendix. 2 Support nonprofit organizations expect from the pillar

- Create space to meeting and collaborate regularly, share opportunities for training/funding/partnering
- Keep all focused on increasing the certainty of productive development for all children residing in Pontiac (?)
- I think being a resource for grant information and encouraging collaboration are huge benefits to the nonprofits in Pontiac
- Help continue collaboration efforts so that geographically close organizations do not duplicate services but help to lift up each organization and their mission
- Provide students to assist with local organizations
- They can continue the work that they are doing in our vulnerable communities.
- Bring in expert speakers to help us all deal with real time issues. Create networking and sharing opportunities.
- I am not sure. Perhaps visiting programs and seeing the work would make collaboration/openness easier. I am not 100% clear on what the OU-Pontiac pillar does, so I am not too clear on how that could intersect with what we do at Accent Pontiac.
- Provide connections to material resources and volunteer/staff development
- I really like the networking potential and the sharing of resources/funding opportunities
- Provide interns and help find funding for mental health
- Be more engaged, more communicative, and more proactive
- Schedule site visits
- For our own situation, involvement of faculty and student projects is a major opportunity. Both faculty and students will find rewarding projects – individually and academically.
- I am learning just want to connect more
- Depends on what you're offering regard funding + resources
- I know so many organizations need funding. They need specifically capacity building funding so many ED have been handling multiple jobs, and they are exhausted. Many organizations are surviving on volunteers and board members for work that needs staff. It is impossible to grow and sustain an organization or volunteers, board members and an exhausted ED.

Appendix 3. The reasons why collaboration became more necessary since COVID-19

- To ensure less duplication of services while also ensuring high quality programming
- We have more resources to provide assistance and thus need greater client base
- We can only serve the clients that come to us, but collaboration means that our organizations can be sharing more clients for each other to serve
- It was difficult to do everything alone. The magnitude and scope of the needs were too great; there had to be a team effort to accomplish things and that mind set has become part of our organization
- In order to act quickly and appropriately it has been necessary to work with others with similar missions to provide services that alleviate the consequences the pandemic has imposed on our community
- We can do more together
- The more hands we can get involved, the larger the impact will be.
- The enormity of the challenges facing our constituents and the constraints of the pandemic upon program delivery
- COVID money is no longer available but the need still persists.
- Shifting consumer dynamics, we must pivot and adapt to survive
- More effective together
- Significant "competition" for grants/resources
- COVID changed the world and people are in more dire need of help
- Breakdown in communication
- Pontiac has previously operated in silos and it is necessary to work together. There are resources, but not if we are all trying to do the same thing for the same group of people.

Appendix 4. Qualifications you expect volunteers to have.

- Nonprofit executive board member
- Enthusiasm! Interest in Pontiac's history. We have various project opportunities with various talents/interests required. Some would involve social media and digital communications. Some artistic talents and architectural renderings. Some studying history of technology in Pontiac products and manufacturing. Some mapping /cartography using GIS. Many types of opportunities.
- Willingness to learn
- 1-2 of experience in human services
- A heartbeat and a positive attitude
- Depends on the department needing them. On for certain is social work and mental health students, urban planning as well, but again it will depend on the department
- Customer service
- Customer service skills, writing skills (full sentences please!), G-Suite familiarity, independent, self-starter
- Motivation, maturity, social skills, time management, personable
- Basic office skills and people/team skills and a willingness to learn. We can walk them through the rest.
- To be enrolled in and currently studying a field within the nonprofit sector, or a relative field. IE Food
- Interested/able to work with youth- Able to get to Pontiac for on-site/event volunteering/internships – have respect for our community
- Nonprofit management experience
- Willingness to help
- Good work ethic. Positive working mentality, ability to be flexible with timing and events
- Good learners, self-starters, dependability
- Basic professional communication and attendance standards. Some knowledge of working with youth, a preference for physical activity. Experience and desire to work with diverse populations experience working with Google related products
- Time management skills for all. The other positions vary greatly depending on our current internships open, but may include experience working with youth, elementary education, marketing, research or communications
- An interest in what we are doing as an organization and a willingness to learn. We can figure out the rest.

Appendix 5: Correlation coefficient matrix of the important factors

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. CEO BIPOC															
2. Board BIPOC	.67***														
3. Board size	-.50**	-.04													
4. Revenue	-.68***	-.56***	.44**												
5. Gov grant (%)	-.02	-.10	.44**	.08											
6. Foundation (%)	-.53***	-.33	.29	.48**	-.23										
7. Donation (%)	.16	.19	-.41**	-.18	-.62***	-.21									
8. Revenue diversification	-.62***	-.47**	.32	.72***	.03	.64***	-.16								
9. FTE	-.21	.07	.65***	.34	.44**	.06	-.29	.21							
10. Age	-.38*	-.14	.45**	.21	.22	-.12	-.15	.27	.26						
11. Gov grant decrease	.34	.22	-.32	-.40*	-.35*	-.37*	.08	-.61***	-.10	-.30					
12. Donation decrease	-.02	.03	-.33	-.27	-.32	-.08	.21	-.29	-.08	.20	.15				
13. Volunteer decrease	-.06	.00	.08	.03	.01	-.20	.07	-.11	.11	.29	-.06	.38*			
14. Budget decrease	.21	.08	-.53***	-.40*	-.37*	-.44**	.33	-.47**	-.25	-.10	.68***	.43**	.20		
15. Operation stop	.31	.54***	-.16	-.41**	-.25	-.41*	.18	-.35*	-.14	.24	.18	.24	.11	.25	
16. Program disruption	-.62***	-.24	.13	.11	-.22	.12	.06	.15	-.02	.31	.22	.35*	.09	.29	.06

Note. Correlation coefficient with *** if p< .01, ** if p <.05, * if p <.1