

## Collaboration Among Michigan's Nonprofits

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### Introduction

To better understand the trends of collaboration among nonprofits in Michigan, the Michigan Nonprofit Association and the Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University surveyed more than 240 nonprofit organizations across the state in August 2009. Collaboration was defined as: two or more organizations working together to achieve a shared goal. Results from the survey reveal that:

- Collaboration within Michigan's nonprofit sector is widespread with 92% of organizations responding that they have collaborated with another nonprofit in the past year, as is shown in *Figure 1*. About half (53%) of participating organizations have received funding for collaboration.
- Programmatic collaboration was the most common activity among collaborating nonprofits with 96% of these organizations responding that they had worked jointly on programs.
- A substantial majority (81%) of nonprofits have worked collaboratively with organizations outside of the nonprofit sector.

Figure 1  
Has Your Organization Collaborated With Another Nonprofit in the Last 12 Months?

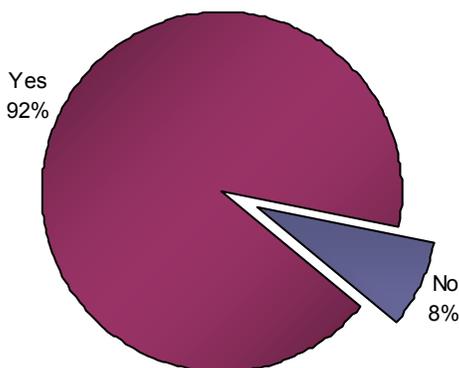
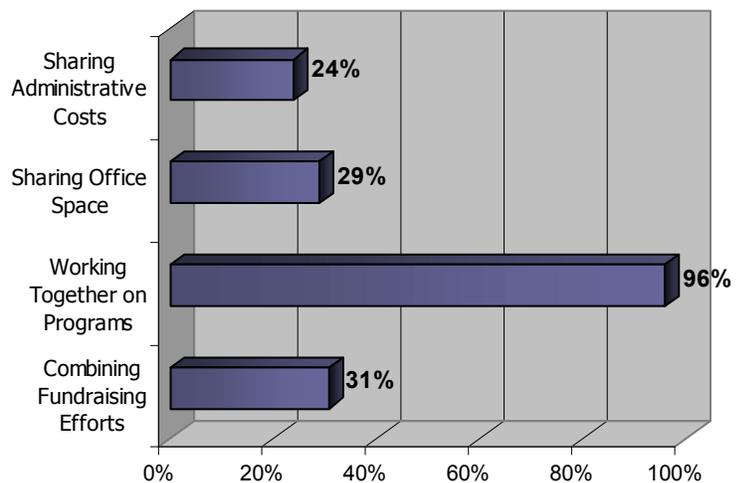


Figure 2  
Activities Included in Nonprofit Collaboration in the Last 12 Months



### Collaboration Between Michigan's Nonprofits

Ninety two percent of participating nonprofits collaborated with another nonprofit in the last 12 months.

- Arts and Culture and Community Service nonprofits had the highest level of collaboration with 100% of these organizations reporting that they had collaborated with another nonprofit in the past year.
- Organizations with budgets of less than \$100,000 were the least likely (84%) to collaborate with another nonprofit.
- As shown in *Figure 2*, collaboration activities included: combining fundraising efforts (31%), working together on programs (96%), sharing office space (29%), and sharing administrative costs (24%).

### Collaboration Policies

Twenty four percent of responding nonprofits have policies governing collaboration.

- Health Care organizations were the most likely (50%) to have policies governing collaboration, as is shown in *Figure 3*.
- Although 100% of Arts and Culture organizations reported collaborating with another nonprofit in the past year, they were the least likely (14%) to have policies governing collaboration.
- The majority (80%) of participating nonprofits allocate staff time to collaborations.
- About half (48%) of responding nonprofits document in-kind costs associated with collaborations.

Figure 3  
Percent of Nonprofits that Have Policies Governing Collaboration by Primary Activity Focus

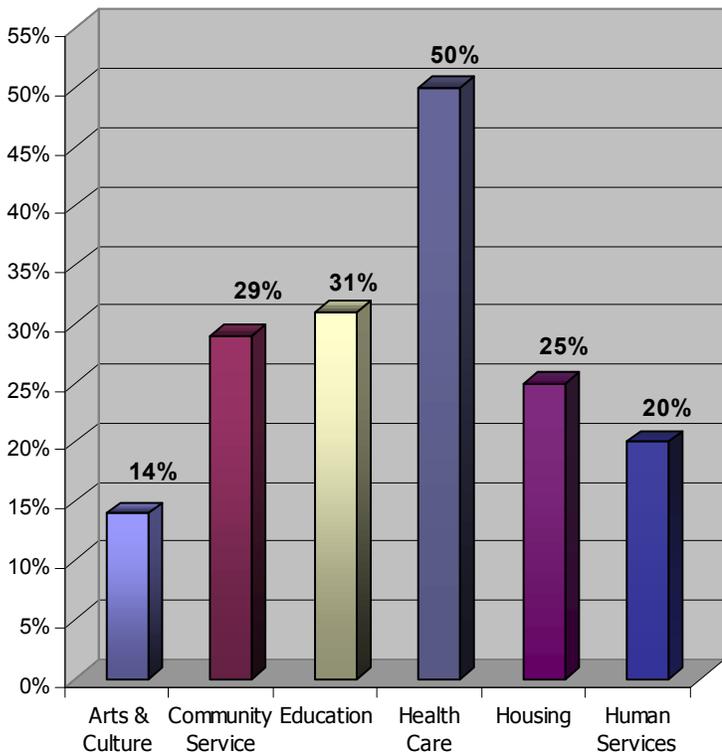
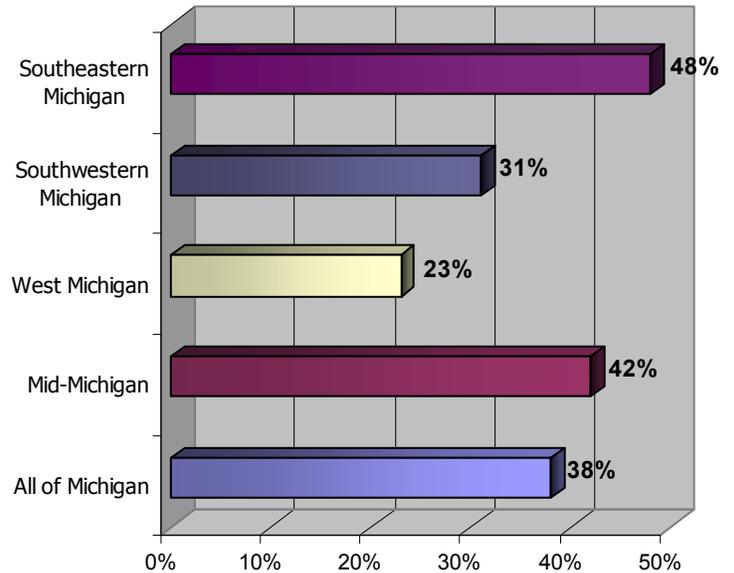


Figure 4  
Percent of Nonprofits Learning More About Collaboration From an Outside Source in the Last 12 Months by Geographical Focus



### Collaboration Learning Resources

Forty percent of participating nonprofits reported learning more about collaboration through an outside source in the last 12 months.

- West Michigan nonprofits were the least likely (23%) to have learned more about collaboration through an outside source, as is shown in *Figure 4*.
- Among organizations reporting learning more about collaboration from an outside source, resources utilized included: trainings (61%), consultants (39%), Management Support Organizations (32%), and technical assistance (28%).
- Nonprofits that had not learned more about collaboration from an outside source in the last 12 months were interested in utilizing: trainings (50%), technical assistance (54%), Management Support Organizations (51%), and consultants (35%).

### Cross Sector Collaboration

Eighty one percent of participating nonprofits reported collaborating with organizations outside of the nonprofit sector in the last 12 months.

- Organizations with budgets of less than \$100,000 were the least likely (68%) to have collaborated with organizations outside of the nonprofit sector, as is shown in *Figure 5*.
- By primary activity focus, Housing organizations were the least likely (63%) to report collaborating outside of the nonprofit sector.
- Organizations reporting collaboration outside of the nonprofit sector collaborated with for-profits (52%), educational institutions (79%), and government agencies (66%).

Figure 5  
Percent of Nonprofits Collaborating With Organizations Outside of Nonprofit Sector in the Last 12 Months by Annual Budget

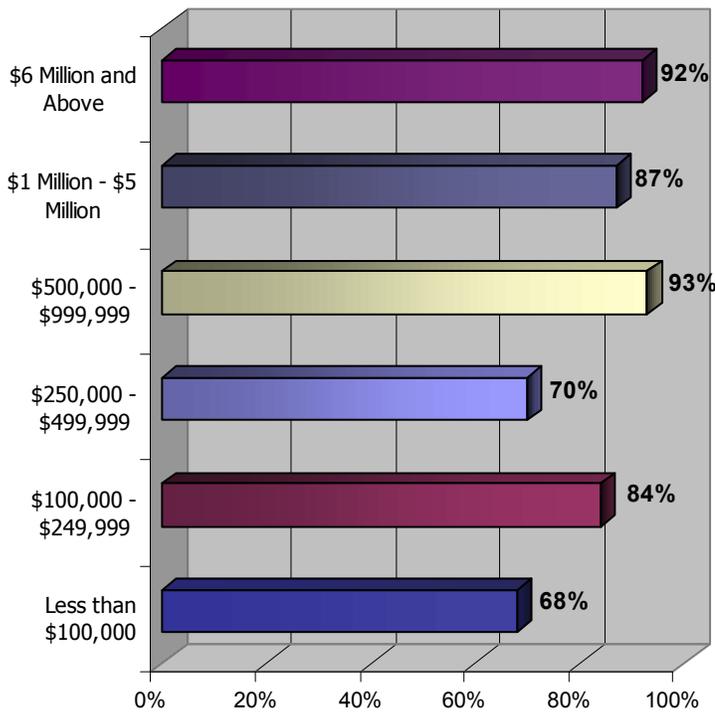
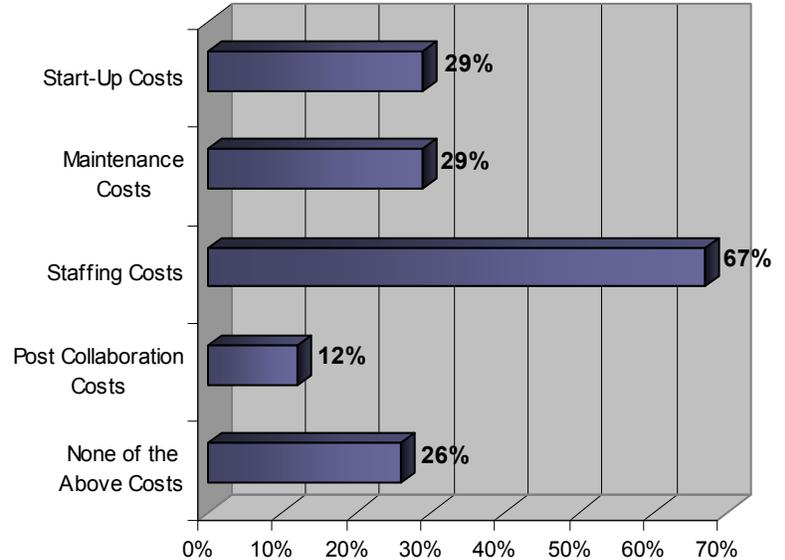


Figure 6  
Collaboration Costs to Nonprofits in the Last 12 Months



- Among nonprofits collaborating outside of the nonprofit sector, organizations with budgets of less than \$100,000 reported the highest levels of collaboration with educational institutions.

### Collaboration Costs

Sixty seven percent of responding nonprofits reported staffing costs associated with collaboration in the last 12 months.

- Arts and Culture nonprofits were the most likely (80%) to experience collaboration staffing costs.
- In addition to staffing costs, nonprofits reported collaboration expenses associated with: start-up costs (29%), maintenance costs (29%), and post-collaboration costs (12%). About a quarter of organizations did not experience any of these collaboration expenses in the last 12 months, as is shown in *Figure 6*.

## Collaboration Funding

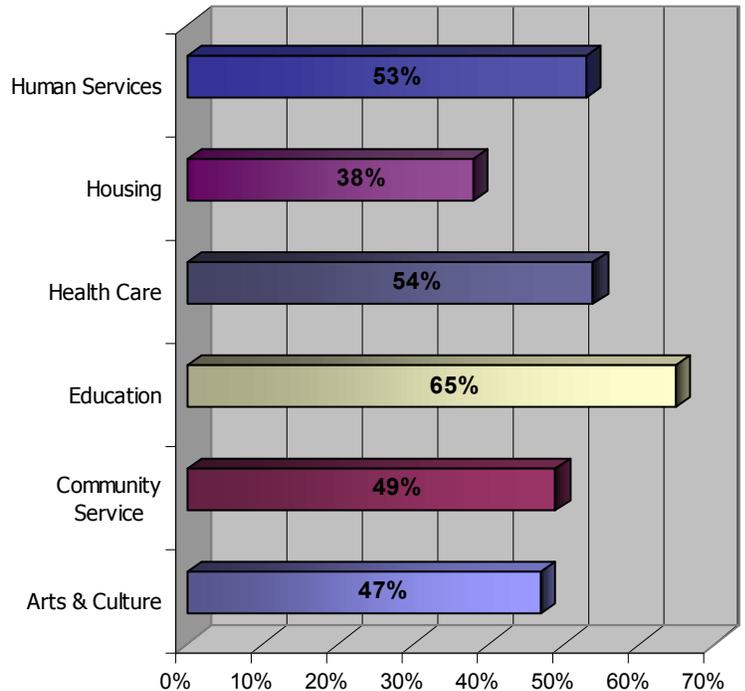
Forty eight percent of participating nonprofits attempted to raise funds for collaboration in the last 12 months.

- The majority of responding organizations (53%) received funding for collaboration in the last 12 months. This surpassed the number of organizations that reported attempting to raise collaboration funds.
- Of organizations that attempted to raise funds for collaboration, 82% received funds.
- As shown in *Figure 7*, Education nonprofits were the most likely to have received funds for collaboration in the last 12 months.

## Conclusion

Findings from this survey indicate that collaboration is a significant trend in Michigan's nonprofit sector. Ninety two percent of responding organizations have collaborated within the nonprofit sector in the last 12 months with 81% of organizations also collaborating outside of the sector. While programmatic collaboration is the most prevalent activity, other forms of collaboration are also being utilized.

Figure 7  
Nonprofits Receiving Funds for Collaboration in the Last 12 Months by Primary Activity Focus



**Michigan Nonprofit Association**

Michigan Nonprofit Association increases the capacity of Michigan's nonprofits to serve, strengthen and transform communities. MNA is affiliated with Michigan Campus Compact, NPower Michigan and Volunteer Centers of Michigan.

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