



# EXTENSION IMPACT

## Nonprofits Addressing Complex Community Issues

**N**onprofits play an important role in addressing complex community issues ranging from homelessness and social justice, to water quality and mental health. Local governments rely on nonprofits to deliver programs and services to residents at low cost. Nonprofits also contribute to the economy, employing 11.9% of Wisconsin's workforce with an annual average wage of \$50,243 per employee. According to the National Council on Charitable Statistics there were over 36,000 registered Wisconsin nonprofits in 2018. Nonprofit organizational development needs typically fall within five broad capacity building categories: (1) organization policy, systems, and structures, (2) leadership, (3) fiscal resources, (4) programs and services, and (5) stakeholder and community engagement.

In 2020, Wisconsin's nonprofits were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Early impacts included reduction in volunteerism, funding, programs and services; changes in programs and services to address increased demand for basic needs and mental health support; and concerns about long-term sustainability. During this tumultuous time, nonprofits continued to look to Extension for support and resources.

*Through Extension's work, nonprofits are more effective at responding to local needs, providing services and programs, and addressing issues ranging from homelessness and social justice, to water quality and mental health.*

In response, Extension's Organizational & Leadership Development Program supported nonprofits through a variety of activities, including facilitation of group processes (41% of documented activities), trainings and workshops (25%), coaching and consultation (14%), and research and data collection (11%). In 2020, we worked with 171 nonprofits in 33 counties in Wisconsin, totaling over 10,000 direct

educational contacts in safe in-person settings or virtual settings. The nonprofits we supported deliver programs and services that touch 20 different sectors, including human services, community improvement, environment, youth development, and food, agriculture, and nutrition.

In 2020, Extension facilitated strategic planning processes for 29 nonprofits through the Organizational & Leadership Development Program. As a direct outcome of Extension's work, leadership of these nonprofits adopted and updated mission and vision statements, and strategic priorities. These actions provided directors and their boards with clear direction for organization decisions, programs, and services. Our educators worked with six community groups interested in forming a 501c3 nonprofit. The groups learned how to write organization bylaws and the steps to apply for incorporation. As a result, each group took action toward filing for incorporation. In response to COVID-19, Extension educators taught nonprofit leaders how to use scenario planning. These nonprofit leaders then created flexible plans for different "COVID-19 realities" that might impact their organization.

In addition to facilitating group processes, and delivering training, Extension educators met with individual nonprofits assisting them with finding solutions to their most pressing needs. This type of coaching and consultation included providing information about nonprofit incorporation, organization bylaws, fund development, and board governance. Using virtual platforms and live interpretation assistance from Extension's Office of Access, Inclusion and Compliance, educators worked with Spanish-speaking members of the Latinx community to help them learn about the requirements and options for incorporating their organization. Educators also assisted executive directors and nonprofit board presidents with diagnosing reasons for a large number of board of director resignations, using bylaws as a tool for board engagement, and navigating the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan process. As a result of Extension's work, nonprofits are more effective at responding to local needs, providing services and programs, and addressing complex community issues ranging from homelessness and social justice, to water quality and mental health.



The Organizational & Leadership Development program is part of Extension's Community Development Institute. Learn more by visiting [leadershipdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu](https://leadershipdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu).

in 2020



171

nonprofits served



10,000

educational contacts across  
20 sectors & 33 counties



29

nonprofits received  
strategic planning services



Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.