May 24, 2017

Dear Environmental Non-Profit and Philanthropic Colleagues,

We are pleased to share two documents produced in the course of an extended exploration of the organizational capacity of Georgia's environmental non-profit sector.

First, Georgia's Environmental Nonprofit Sector: State of the Sector Assessment and Report includes all of the original research data generated by a combination of surveys and interviews with executives of 36 environmental non-profits that comprised the research cohort. Second, Report from the Field captures lessons learned from the entire project. The document builds on a day-long convening in which 47 staff and board members from the research cohort gathered to reflect on the data and their personal experience and provides specific recommendations for strengthening the sector's organizational capacity.

Our hope is that these reports will serve as a catalyst for reflection, planning and action among Georgia's environmental non-profits and the donors who support them.

We encourage non-profit executives and board chairs to set aside board time for consideration of what these findings mean for your particular context. While each organization has to chart its own course for organizational development, perhaps there will be opportunities for collaboration with colleagues as you identify opportunities for strengthening your governance, programmatic and administrative practices.

For donors committed to environmental stewardship, we would submit that it is impossible to separate issues of organizational capacity from the results you hope to achieve with your philanthropic support of the sector. We hope these reports will inform and influence your engagement with and support for Georgia's environmental non-profits.

Georgia is an environmental treasure. From the 14 watersheds within our borders to mountains in the north to our coastal region, our state is home to internationally significant biodiversity, beautiful landscapes, and countless opportunities for outdoor inspiration and adventure. Our natural resources provide Georgians with remarkable quality of life and significant economic activity. We hope these materials will be helpful as we all seek the most effective path toward strong, sustainable stewardship through an impactful non-profit sector.

We'd like to express our appreciation to Chandra Brown and April Ingle who provided strong leadership for the project and authored the reports. We'd also like to thank the non-profit executives and board members who shared information about their respective organizations and contributed time and expertise to the process.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention.

R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation
Kendeda Fund
The Sapelo Foundation
Turner Foundation
A foundation that wishes to remain anonymous

Georgia's Environmental Nonprofit Sector

State of the Sector Assessment and Report

Produced by Chandra Brown and April Ingle

January, 2016

Georgia's Environmental Nonprofit Sector

State of the Sector Assessment and Report

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Executive Summary

A group of institutional funders (the funders) commissioned this report to assess several factors related to organizational capacity and performance of Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector. To conduct the assessment, data was collected from recent 990 tax forms from all organizations in the sector. Enhanced data was also collected from a research cohort (the cohort) of 36 organizations that was selected from all organizations in the sector and represents a cross-section of budget ranges, geographic scope, and issues addressed. Additionally, data was collected from a select group of stakeholders.

The cohort and stakeholders provided information for this report through surveys and interviews. While individual opinions varied on specific issues, overall, the opinions of stakeholders and executives were aligned.

The Findings

The majority of organizations in the sector are operating on small budgets, with 54% of organizations operating on budgets less than $100,000. All organizations in the cohort have budgets over $100,000, with one exception.

The cohort organizations' 990 tax forms provided insight into recent financial health trends. In the five-year period following the latest recession (2009-2013), the cohort, as a whole, experienced income growth. Over half of the cohort also had an operating surplus the three out of five years in this period. Individually, the budget trends of organizations in the cohort varied greatly over this period.

Despite the overall growth trends in income and surpluses, the vast majority of executives and stakeholders perceived funding as a key constraint for the sector and individual organizations. At the same time, the sector and individual organizations have room to grow their financial capacity and program participation. Organizations in Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector are operating with less competition than most surrounding states. Simultaneously, the percentage of the population donating to wildlife and environment causes is the lowest of surrounding states and below the national average as well. The cohort's average and median rates of membership are also low.

Executives and stakeholders also identified a lack of diversity in membership and leadership as a sector-wide constraint. Expanding and broadening the base of supporters and growing the number of Georgia donors to approach or match regional averages is a significant opportunity. A thoughtful, concerted effort to grow, diversify and broaden the base of public support could provide needed funds, and build programmatic and policy success, for the sector.

The vast majority of executives in the cohort also identified lack of staffing and not enough time as key constraints to their organization's performance. Overall staff sizes of organizations are relatively small, and tenures for current staff and executives in the cohort are short. Further investigation of staff and executive turnover and retention could reveal the cause and effect of short tenures on organizations.

Many cohort organizations reported serving as talent "incubators." These organizations hire and train staff who later move on to new opportunities and advance their careers at other sector organizations. Overall, the cohort utilizes a variety of leadership and professional development training methods to develop staff and executive leadership and job skills. Continued investment in career advancement opportunities for new and existing staff could help continue to "incubate" and utilize talent.

Many (but not all) organizations are developing and using essential planning processes, such as budgeting, strategic planning, fundraising planning, and annual plans of work. However, very few organizations reported employing succession planning. Increasing organizational planning could allow the sector to address some of the needs outlined in this report.

Executives reported spending the majority of their time on program implementation and management/leadership. While cohort organizations maintain a good balance of new-to-experienced tenure on their boards, board development garnered the least amount of the executives' time and confidence. In addition to maintaining professional development opportunities and organizational planning, the sector could also invest more in fully developing board leadership potential.

The vast majority of executives and stakeholders reported that there were not gaps or overlap in their programs, or a need for additional programs. However, executives and stakeholders did identify a need to do more and reach broader and more diverse audiences with their programming. While many organizations are simultaneously working on the same issues or offering similar programs or services, most reported that they had carved out specific niches in regards to audience and/or need and were not experiencing overlap. It may be important for the sector to explore correlations between diversity and breadth of engagement in their organizations, membership levels and financial support of their organizations, and the programming they offer.

The majority of organizations provide education programming. Education programming also had the highest reported demand. Additional capacity and resources for the sector could potentially be harnessed through the coordination and aggregation of education program development and delivery. By aggregating and coordinating education programming, the sector could potentially increase public engagement with limited resources.

Advocacy was the second most common programming provided by cohort organizations. Organizations were most likely to participate in advocacy through their participation in coalitions and by asking their supporters to contact elected officials about issues. The majority of executives ranked their own organization as "somewhat" influential on advocacy issues and the sector as "very" to "somewhat" influential on advocacy issues. There may be important connections between the sector's relatively low financial and membership support and its level of influence. Furthermore, several executives and stakeholders identified the need to increase collaboration across the sector to enhance its influence on advocacy issues as well as its efforts to grow, broaden and diversify participation in the sector.

The majority of the cohort thought that it is very or extremely important for the sector to influence issues discussed during elections as well as the election of candidates. Despite their views on the importance of elections in regards to their issues, relatively few executives reported their organizations are actively involved in activities related to elections. The vast majority of executives and stakeholders identified the need for more 501c4 election efforts to support sector-wide conservation issues.
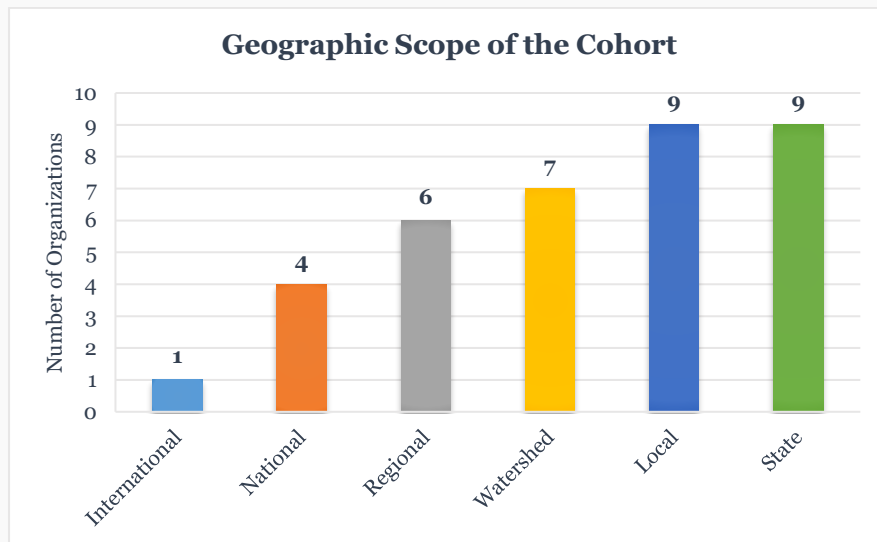
Introduction

The R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation, Kendeda Fund, Sapelo Foundation, Turner Foundation and a foundation that wishes to remain anonymous (the funders) commissioned this research study to:

A. Develop a comprehensive database of all currently active nonprofit organizations operating in Georgia with an environmental mission
B. Assess the following questions:
   - What is the state of Georgia's nonprofit environmental sector?
     o   Does the sector have the capacity to meet demands?
        ▪   What - if any - capacity is lacking?
        ▪   Is the sector constrained by lack of leadership development or other constraints?
     o   Are there gaps and/or overlap in the programs and services the sector provides?
     o   Is the sector constrained by lack of capacity, coordination, or declining influence on policy issues and/or elections?
     o   Is there a need for an unencumbered convener for the sector?

The funders hired consultants April Ingle and Chandra Brown (the consultants) to conduct this research project.

To conduct the assessment, the funders and consultants selected a research cohort (the cohort) from which to collect enhanced data. This cohort of 36 organizations was selected from all organizations in the sector with a budget over $100,000 (with one exception) and represents a cross-section of budget ranges, geographic scope, and issues addressed.

Source: Cohort Interviews

Issues Addressed by the Cohort

Number of Organizations

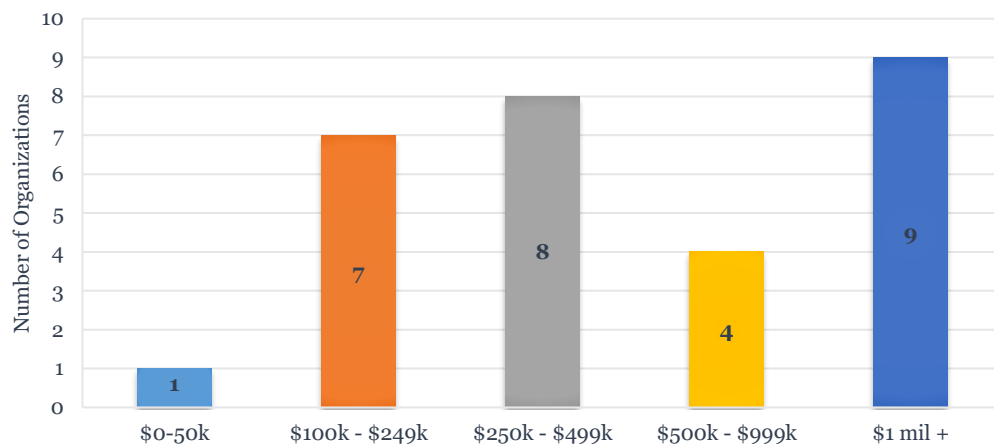| Toxics	Transportation	Environmental Justice	Beautification/Recycling	Sustainable Ag	Forestry	Clean Air	Fish/Wildlife/Plants	Clean Energy	Land Conservation	Coastal Protection	Environmental Education	Water Supply	Clean Water
1	2	2	2	2	4	5	5	6	7	7	9	10	14
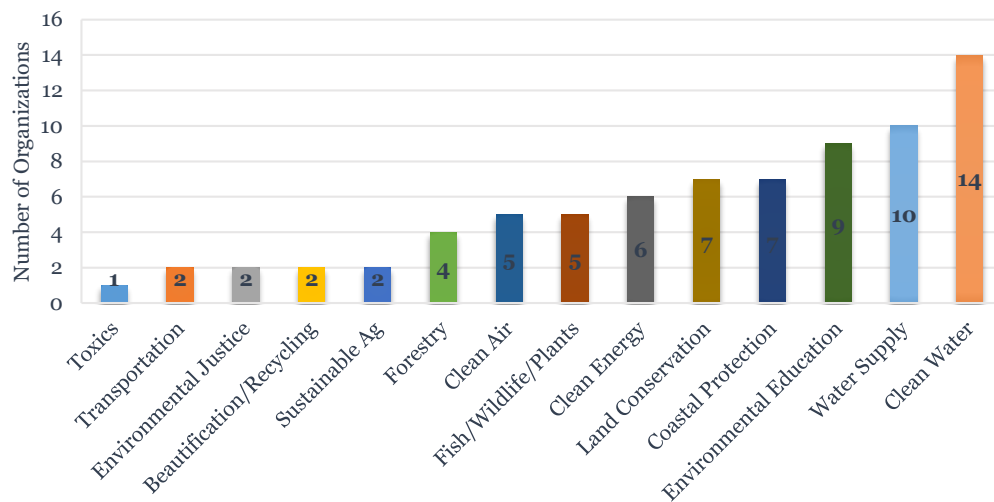
Source: Cohort Interviews

Budget Sizes of Cohort

Number of Organizations

$0-50k	$100k - $249k	$250k - $499k	$500k - $999k	$1 mil +
1	7	8	4	9

Source: Cohort Surveys

The consultants conducted telephone interviews with the executive leader of each of the 36 organizations in the cohort to gather data. Twenty-nine organizations in the cohort also completed an online survey to provide additional data.

The funders and consultants also developed a list of stakeholders to gather input via phone interviews. Thirty-six stakeholders connected to the sector in a variety of ways participated in phone interviews and provided data for the State of the Sector Assessment. Individuals within both of these groups shared ideas on specific issues. However, the overall perception on the broader issues discussed herein from both groups was closely aligned.

The ***Executive Summary*** summarizes key findings of this assessment. The ***State of the Sector Assessment*** provides a complete assessment of the information and observations collected from the research cohort and stakeholders. ***Appendix 1*** contains a complete list of participating cohort organizations and stakeholders. ***Appendix 2*** contains additional data and analyses used to create this assessment.

The following organizations comprised the Research Cohort

1. Altamaha Riverkeeper
2. American Rivers
3. Athens Land Trust
4. Atlanta Audubon
5. Center for a Sustainable Coast
6. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
7. Clean Air Campaign
8. Environment Georgia
9. Flint Riverkeeper
10. Flint RiverQuarium
11. Georgia Conservancy
12. Georgia Forest Watch
13. Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
14. Georgia Land Trust
15. Georgia Organics
16. Georgia River Network
17. Georgia Solar Energy Association
18. Georgia WAND
19. Georgia Wildlife Federation
20. Greening Forward
21. Greening Youth
22. Mothers and Others for Clean Air
23. Mountain Conservation Trust
24. National Wild Turkey Federation
25. Ogeechee Riverkeeper
26. One Hundred Miles
27. Phinizy Center for Water Sciences
28. Sandy Creek Nature Center
29. Satilla Riverkeeper
30. Savannah Riverkeeper
31. Sierra Club
32. Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance
33. Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
34. Southern Conservation Trust
35. Southface
36. St. Simons Land Trust

State of the Sector

Sector Overview

As of October of 2014, there were 458 active nonprofit organizations in the environmental nonprofit sector in Georgia. The IRS uses the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) system to classify nonprofit organizations. Searching a wide-variety of environmentally related NTEE codes in the Guidestar database yielded an initial list of over one thousand organizations. This list of organizations was culled to include only organizations with an environmental mission. An organization was considered to have an environmental mission if it focused on one or more of the following:
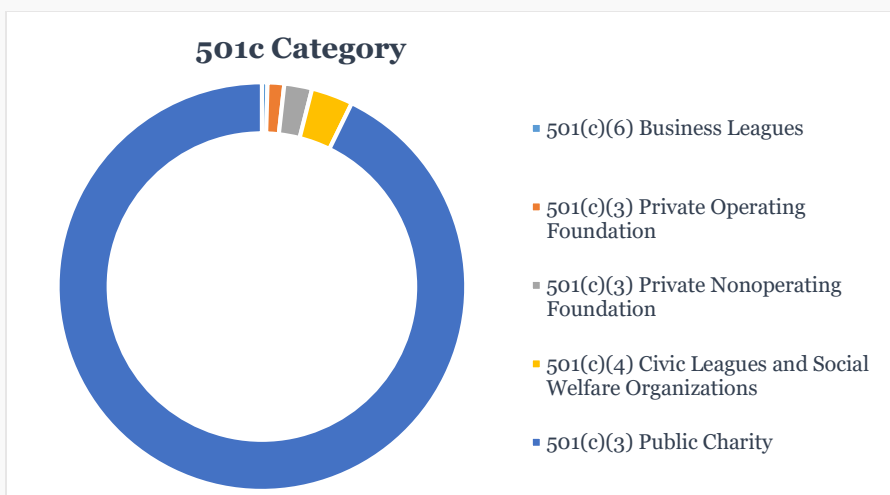
- Beautification
- Clean air/climate/energy
- Clean water
- Coastal protection
- Environmental education/outdoor recreation w/ a conservation focus
- Environmental justice
- Fish/wildlife/plants conservation
- Forest protection
- Lake/homeowners group w/ a conservation focus
- Land conservation/preservation
- Public environmental health
- Sustainability/recycling
- Sustainable agriculture
- Sustainable transportation
- Water supply sustainability and/or conservation

An organization was considered "active" if it was a registered 501c organization with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (or had a 501c fiscal sponsor) and had filed a 990 tax form within the last two years.

Total Organizations

458 Organizations in the Sector

Source: Compilation and analysis of NTEE code queries

Of the total organizations in the sector, the vast majority are registered with the IRS as 501c3 public charities.
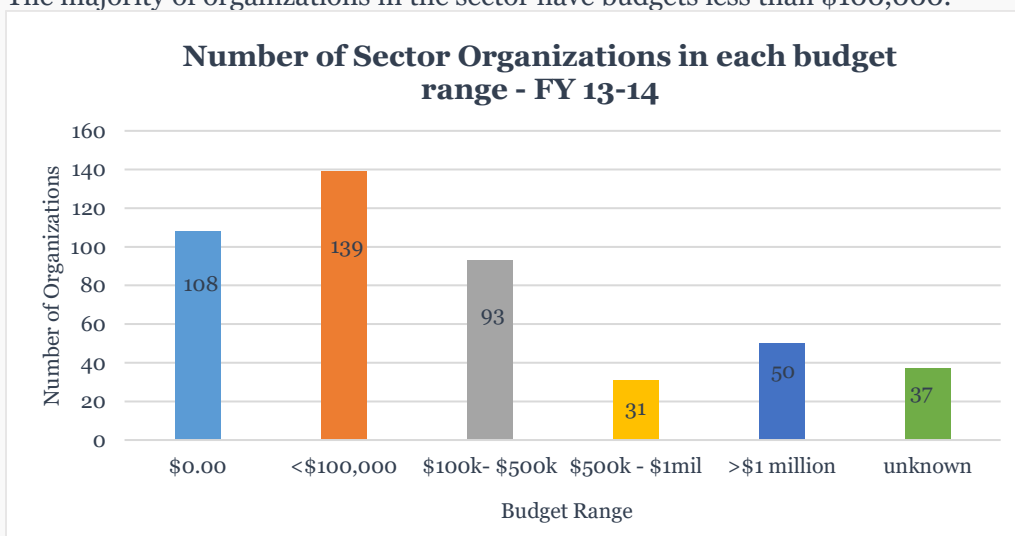
501c Category

- 501(c)(6) Business Leagues
- 501(c)(3) Private Operating Foundation
- 501(c)(3) Private Nonoperating Foundation
- 501(c)(4) Civic Leagues and Social Welfare Organizations
- 501(c)(3) Public Charity

Source: Guidestar

Organizational Capacity

To assess the organizational capacity of the sector we evaluated several factors. The findings are highlighted below.

A. Financial Capacity and Support

The majority of organizations in the sector have budgets less than $100,000.

Number of Sector Organizations in each budget range - FY 13-14

Budget Range	Number of Organizations
$0.00	108
<$100,000	139
$100k- $500k	93
$500k - $1mil	31
>$1 million	50
unknown	37

Source: IRS 990 tax forms. Note: Zero income could mean one of two things: 1. the organization actually has $0 income or, 2. the organization has income greater than $0 but less than $50,000 and file a 990n e-postcard, in which case their income is unavailable and reported as $0. Unknown income means we did not have access to the organization's 990 or that the organization's 990 was not applicable (i.e. they are a national organization).

The research cohort was purposefully selected to be representative of the different budget ranges in the sector over $100,000, with only one organization in the cohort with a budget less than $50,000.

**Number of Cohort Organizations in each budget range - FY 13-14**
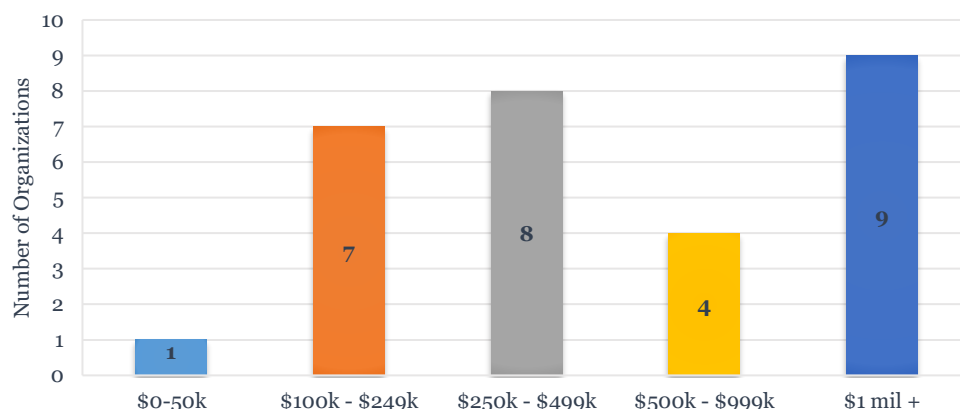
Source: Cohort Survey
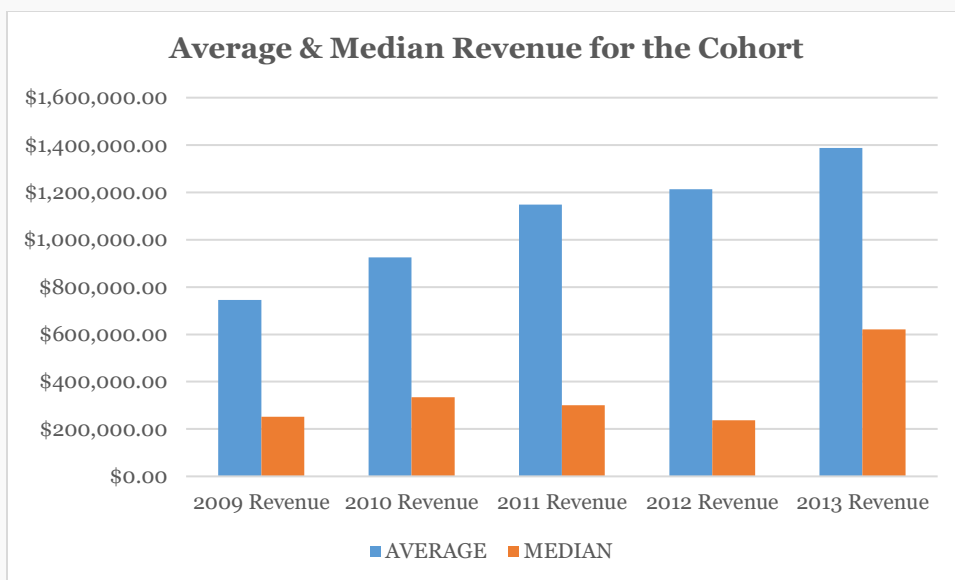
Five-year financial trends

Income and expense data was collected from 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 990 tax forms for 30 organizations in the cohort. After removing Georgia Land Trust and St. Simons Land Trust's data due to large fluctuations in revenue, analysis of the data shows an upward trend in income for the sector:

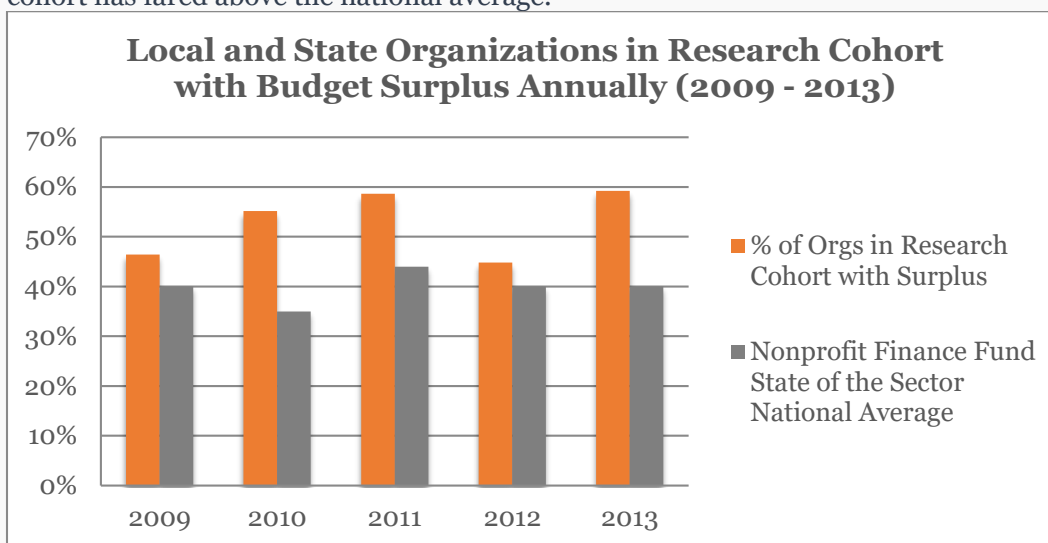Total revenue for the cohort increased 72.29% from 2009 to 2013
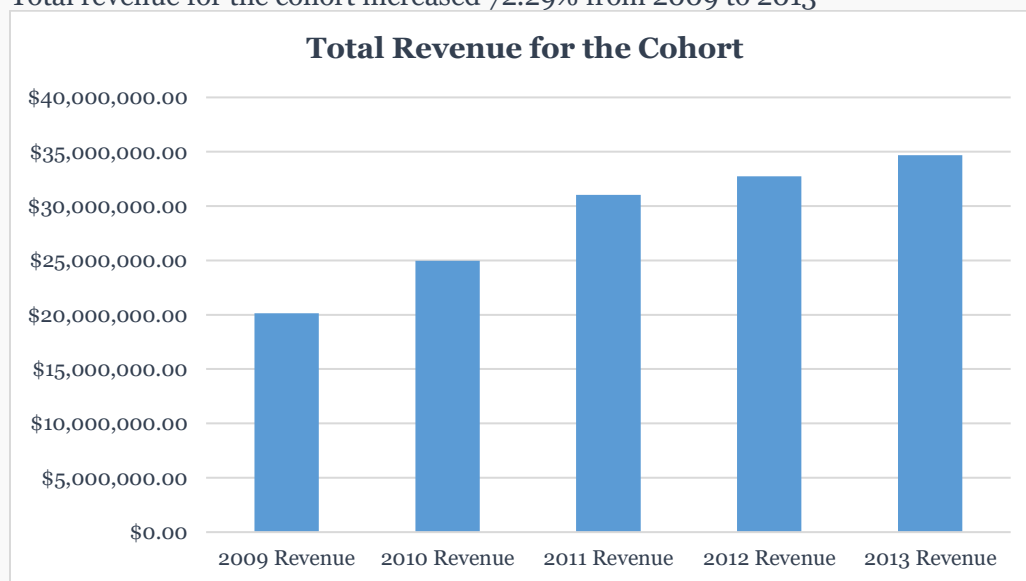
Total Revenue for the Cohort

Source: Cohort IRS 990 tax forms *excluding data from Georgia Land Trust, Saint Simons Land Trust, and six national and regional organizations. Data does not exist for One Hundred Miles in 2009-2012. Data was not available for 3 organizations in 2013.*

Average income increased 86.08% from 2009 to 2013. Median income increased 146.73% from 2009 to 2013. It is important to note that the period for this data is the post-recession recovery period.

Average & Median Revenue for the Cohort

A bar chart showing Average (blue) and Median (orange) revenue for 2009–2013. The y-axis ranges from $0.00 to $1,600,000.00 in increments of $200,000.00. Categories: 2009 Revenue, 2010 Revenue, 2011 Revenue, 2012 Revenue, 2013 Revenue. Legend: AVERAGE, MEDIAN.

Source: Cohort IRS 990 tax forms *excluding data from Georgia Land Trust, Saint Simons Land Trust, and six national and regional organizations. Data does not exist for One Hundred Miles in 2009-2012. Data was not available for 3 organizations in 2013.*

Another way to assess financial health is an organization's operating surplus or deficit. According to the Nonprofit Finance Fund, an operating surplus (annual revenue exceeds expenses) is a key indicator of organizational health. According to the NFF State of the Sector Report for 2015, 47% of nonprofits nationally reported ending 2014 with a surplus, the highest in the history of the survey. A review of available income and expenses for state and local organizations in the cohort indicates that as a whole, the cohort has fared above the national average.

Local and State Organizations in Research Cohort with Budget Surplus Annually (2009 - 2013)

A bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 70% in increments of 10%. Categories: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013. Legend: % of Orgs in Research Cohort with Surplus (orange), Nonprofit Finance Fund State of the Sector National Average (gray).

**Source: Cohort IRS 990 tax forms and 2015 NFF State of Sector Report**

While the cohort as a whole fared above the national average, there was a lot of variation in individual organizations. When comparing income versus expenses for this timeframe, 45%-59% of the cohort experienced budget shortfalls. Individually, organizations faced various budget circumstances during this 5-year period:

1. Eleven organizations had income and expense growth, yet kept expenses below income, resulting in an average budget surplus for the period.

2. Six organizations had moderate declines in income (-6 to -25%) with expenses slightly exceeding income, resulting in small budget shortfalls (<-25%) averaged over the period.
3. Three organizations had significant declines in income (-55% to -118%) over the period and responded by cutting expenses, resulting in an average 5-year budget surplus.
4. Three organizations had an increase in income and a slightly larger expense increase over the period – resulting in small shortfalls (< - 11%).
5. Three organizations had increases in income and expenses over the period, resulting in significant budget shortfalls (> - 34%).
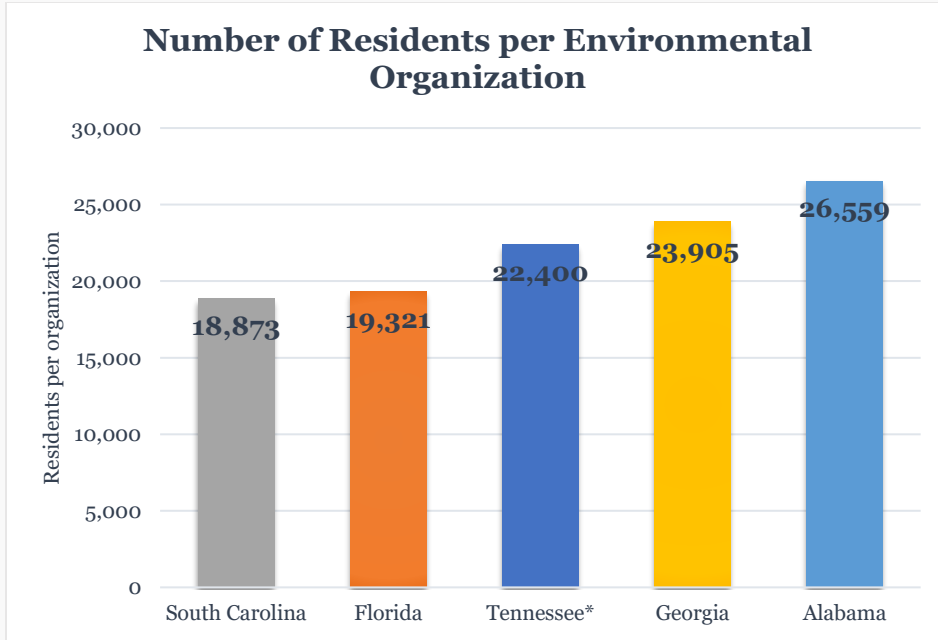
How Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector compares to surrounding states

Of the 458 organizations in Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector, the majority (54%) had a budget under $100,000. However, the average revenue for the entire sector (vs. the cohort) was $689,273. This average revenue is in line with other surrounding states, with the exception of Tennessee. Even after removing Ducks Unlimited's revenue data (Duck's Unlimited is a large, international organization headquartered in Tennessee with $130,527,430 in revenue in FY 2013), the average revenue for Tennessee environmental nonprofits greatly exceeded other surrounding states.
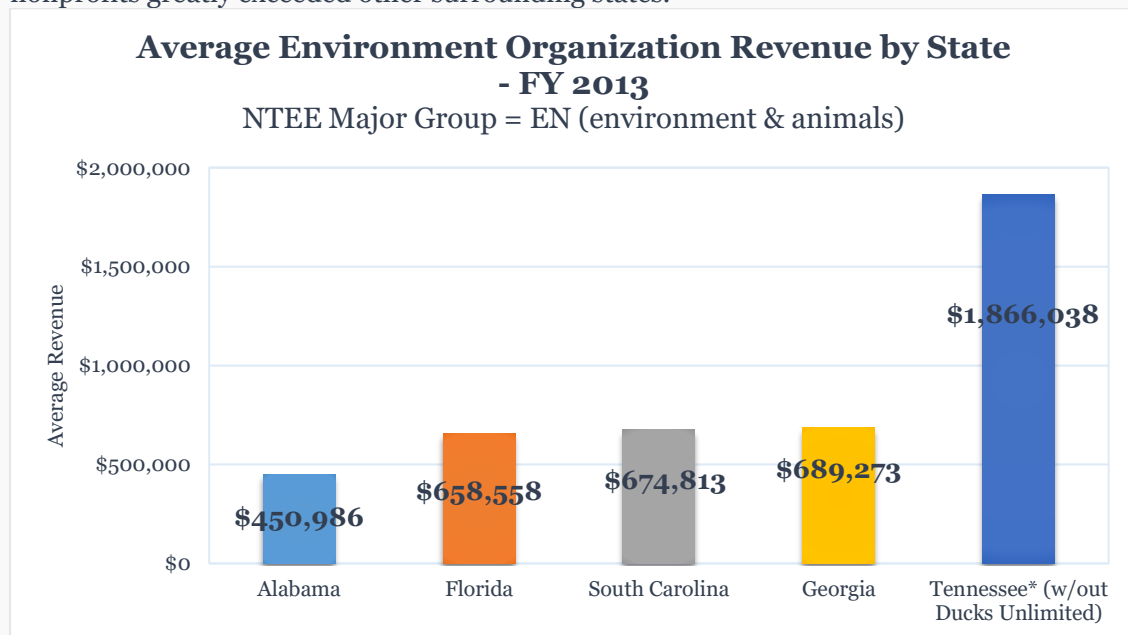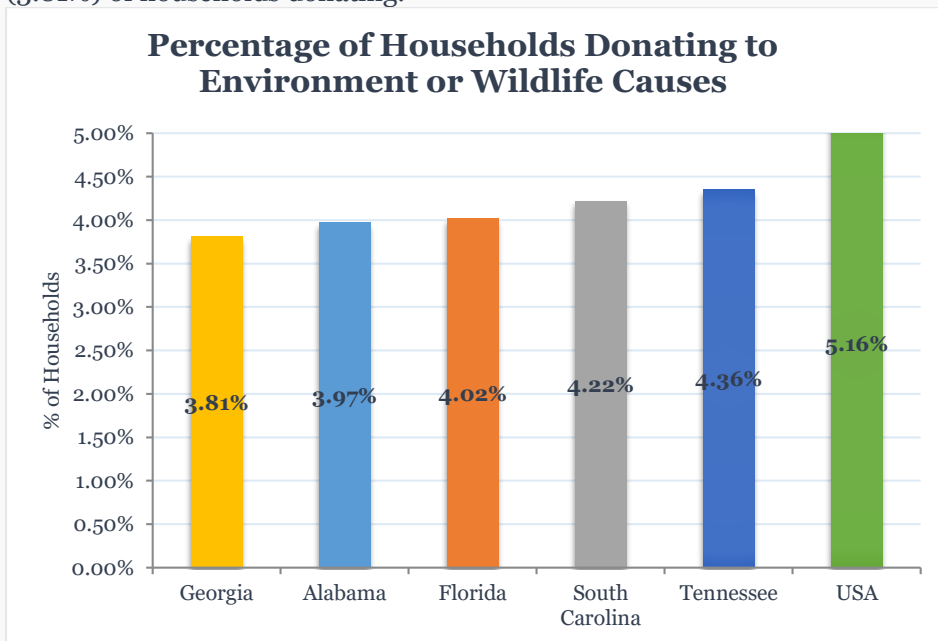

Source: NCSS Core File (Public Charities) [The Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics](#)

While the average revenue for environmental organizations in Georgia is generally on par with other surrounding states, Georgia's population is the second least-served by environmental organizations. Based on the number of organizations and the total population size, Georgia has the second lowest rate of competition when compared to surrounding states.

Number of Residents per Environmental Organization

Bar chart showing residents per organization:
- South Carolina: 18,873
- Florida: 19,321
- Tennessee*: 22,400
- Georgia: 23,905
- Alabama: 26,559

Sources: US Census. NCCS Core File (Public Charities) The Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics

Additionally, data indicates that Georgia environmental nonprofits have room to grow financial support in comparison to national and regional donor averages. The region generally lags behind the national average of households (5.16%) donating to wildlife or environment causes. Compared to other surrounding states, Georgia has the second highest total number of households donating (128,000), but has the lowest percentage (3.81%) of households donating.

Percentage of Households Donating to Environment or Wildlife Causes

Bar chart showing % of households:
- Georgia: 3.81%
- Alabama: 3.97%
- Florida: 4.02%
- South Carolina: 4.22%
- Tennessee: 4.36%
- USA: 5.16%

**Sources:** US Census and InfoUSA

Membership

The average number of members for the cohort is 2,985 members; the median number is 800 members. The majority of organizations have less than 1,000 members and most fall in the 500-1,000 members range. The cohort reported a combined total of 67,860 members, and it is likely that there is overlap of members between organizations. Four organizations reported that they do not have members, and one is a national organization with members nationwide. The IRS does not require reporting membership numbers. Furthermore, state and locally focused organizations rarely publicly publish their membership numbers. Therefore, it was not possible within the scope of this project to establish a comparison of membership rates for similarly sized organizations within the region.

Membership Ranges Reported by Cohort Organizations
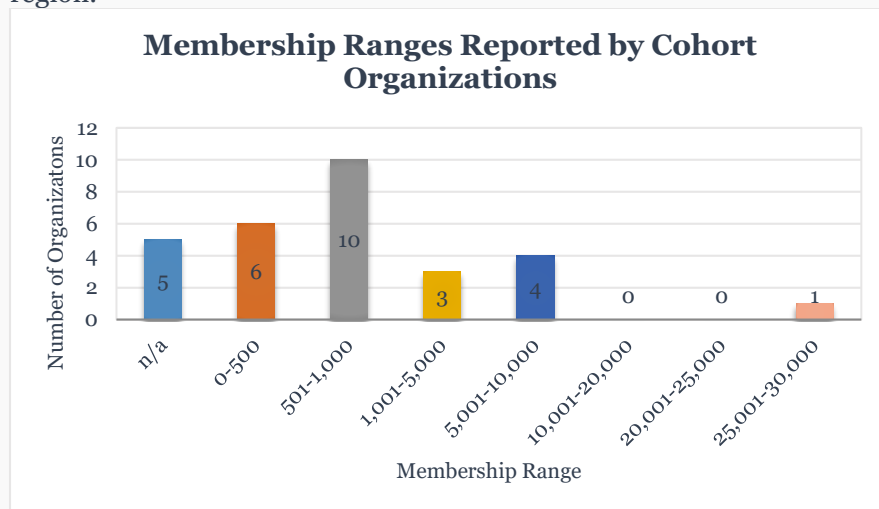
Source: Cohort Surveys

B. Organizational Longevity

A large majority of organizations in the cohort have proven longevity and have been in existence over 10 years.

Age Range of Cohort Organizations
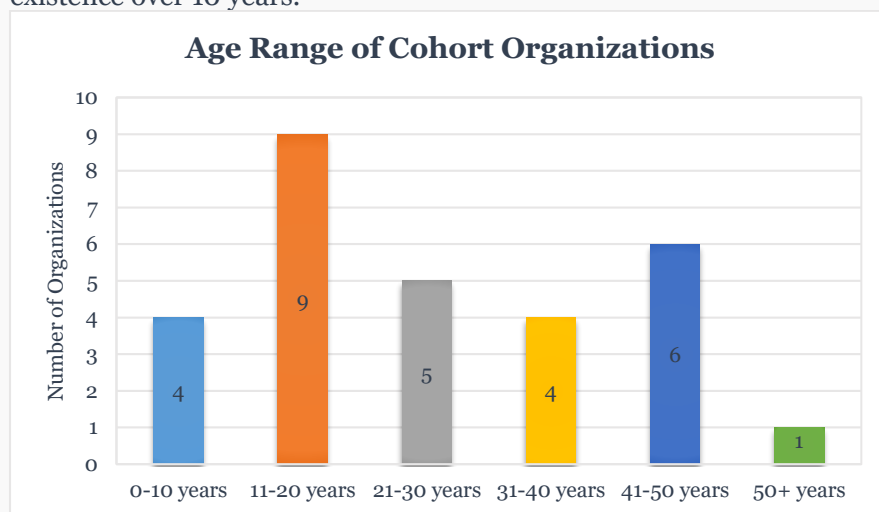
Source: Cohort Surveys

C. Organizational Planning

Some essential organizational planning processes are not current and in use by all organizations in the cohort, including:

- Annual Budget: current and in use in 25 out of 29 organizations
- Annual Work Plans for staff: current and in use in 18 out of 29 organizations
- 3-5 Year Strategic Plan: current and in use in 16 out of 29 organizations
- Annual Fundraising Plan: current and in use in 15 out of 29 organizations
- Staff training plan: current and in use in 8 out of 29 organizations
- Volunteer development plan: current and in use in 8 out of 29 organizations
- Succession planning: only 2 out of 29 organizations

Source: Cohort Surveys

D. Organizational Evaluation and Assessment

The majority of organizations are evaluating staff performance, Executive Director performance, program performance, and fundraising performance every year. The majority of organizations are not evaluating board or volunteer performance every year.
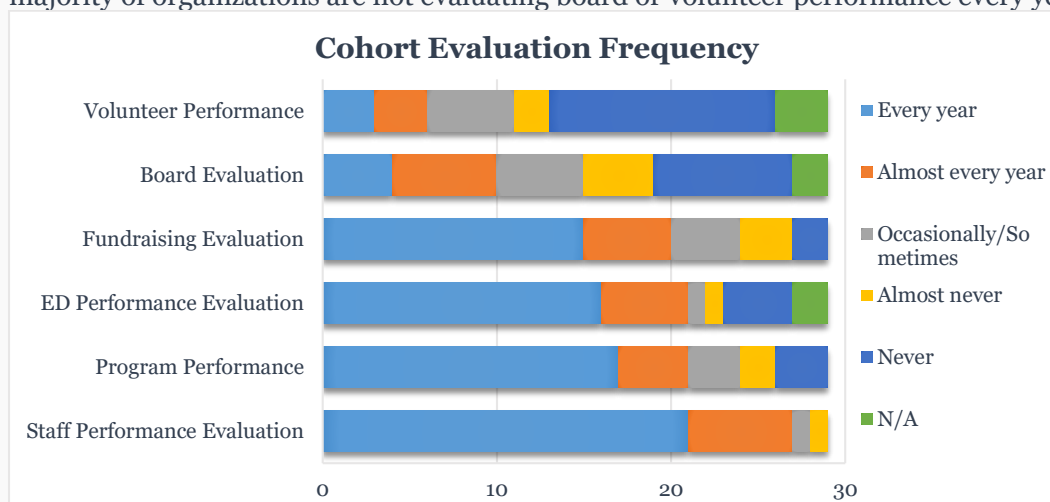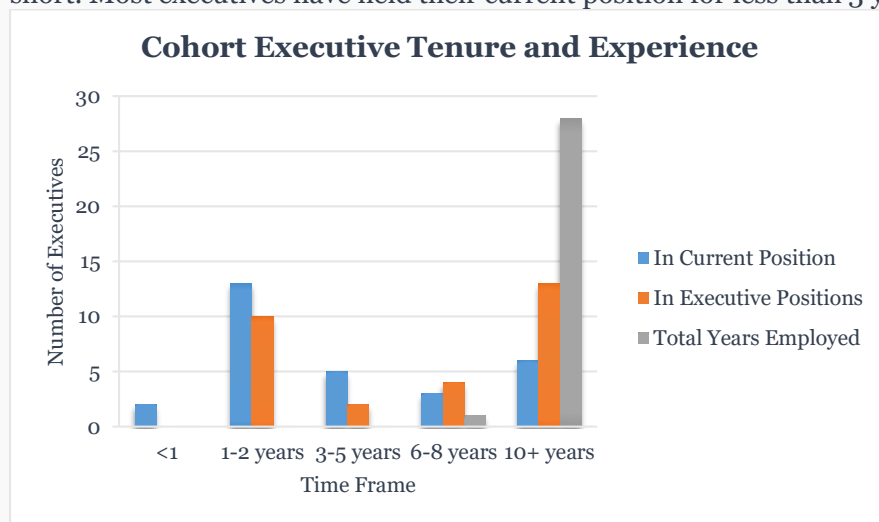

Source: Cohort Surveys

E. Staffing

While most organizations have few staff (the median staff size is 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTE)), organizations with large staffs pushed the average staff size to 6.98 FTE. The cohort employs roughly 200 people in Georgia.

Staff Size of Research Cohort
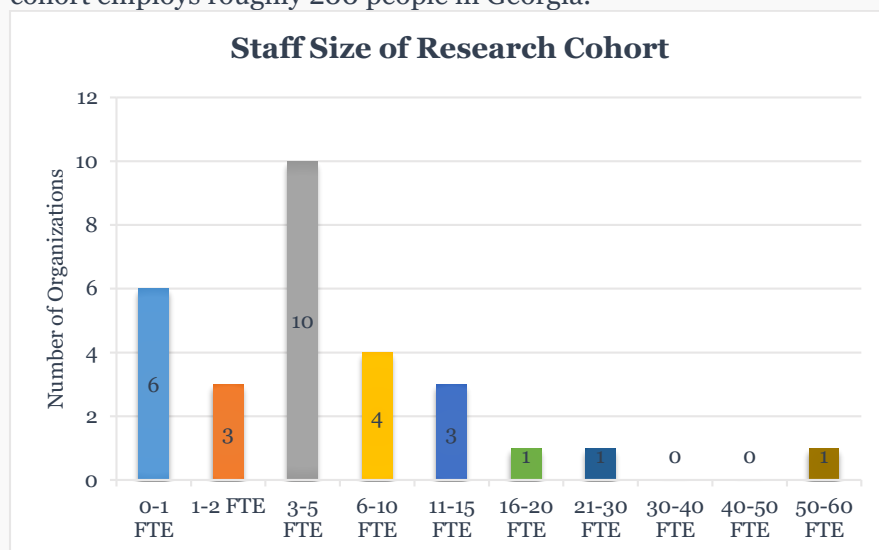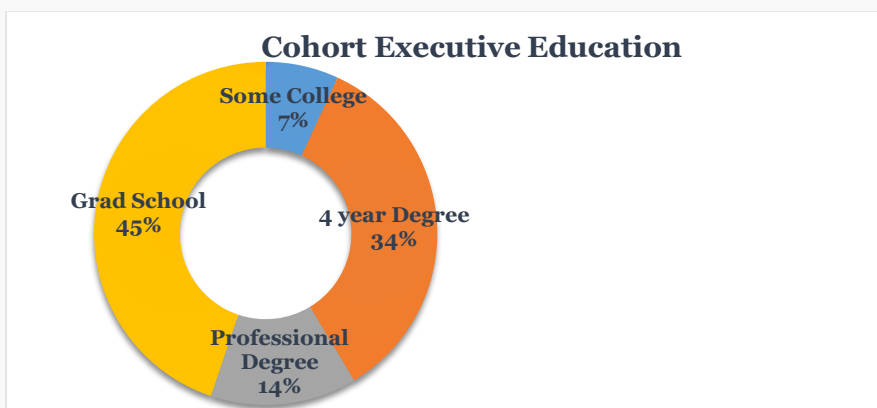

Source: Cohort Surveys

F. Executive staff

Executives in the cohort are experienced. Sixty-two percent of executives have held executive positions for 5+ years. However, tenure in their current position is relatively short. Most executives have held their current position for less than 3 years.
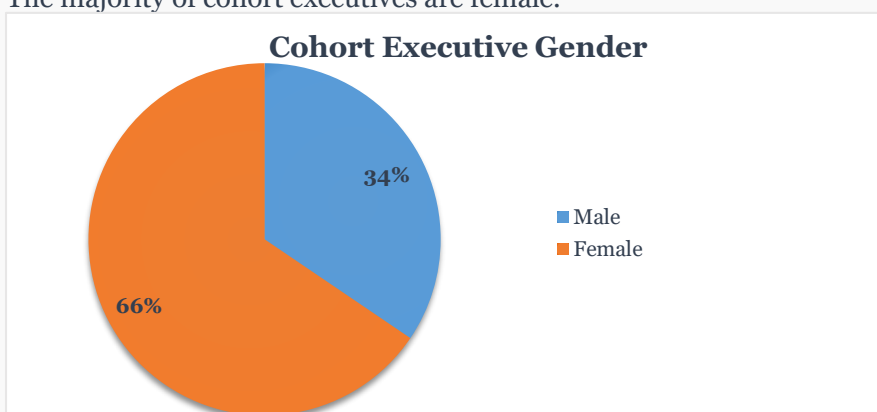
Cohort Executive Tenure and Experience

Source: Cohort Surveys

The majority of cohort executives are highly educated, holding graduate or professional degrees.

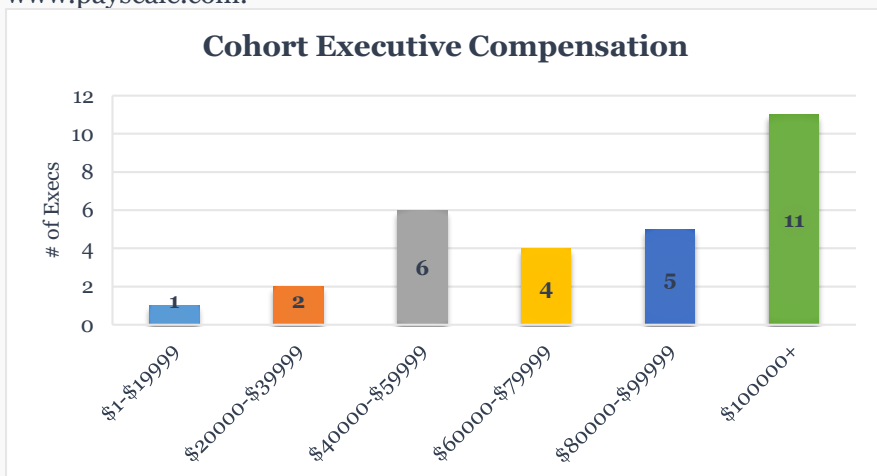## Cohort Executive Education

Some College 7%

4 year Degree 34%

Professional Degree 14%

Grad School 45%

The majority of cohort executives are female.

Cohort Executive Gender

34%

66%

■ Male
■ Female

The majority of executives in the cohort reported they are receiving compensation in line with nonprofit executives in other sectors. The median salary for executives in the cohort, as reported by the executives in the surveys, is $80,000 - $100,000, slightly above the median salary for nonprofit executive directors in Atlanta, which is $74,208 according to www.payscale.com.

Cohort Executive Compensation

of Execs

$1-$19999	$20000-$39999	$40000-$59999	$60000-$79999	$80000-$99999	$100000+
1	2	6	4	5	11

An executive's tenure in their position, or the organization's budget size, did not correlate with executive compensation.

Executives reported spending most of their time on program implementation and management/leadership. Board development garnered the least amount of the executives' time. Overall, executives' time is spread over several responsibilities.

Executive Estimated Time Allocation

- Program Implementation
- Management/Leadership
- Administration
- Fundraising
- Board Development
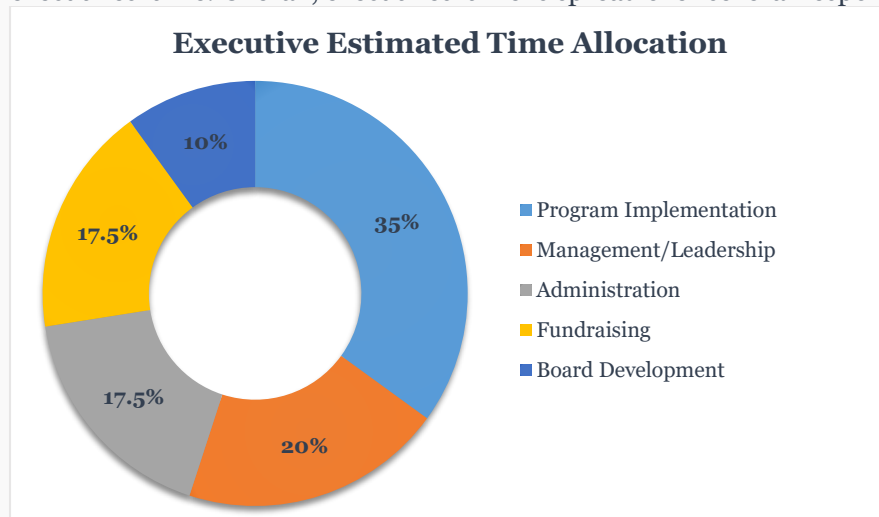
Source: Cohort Surveys

G. Leadership Development and Professional Development

When asked about their organization's capacity needs, 10 executives identified staff skill-building as a capacity need for their organization. Thirteen stakeholders also identified staff skill-building as a sector-wide capacity need. The majority of organizations are budgeting for, and providing, professional development for their staff.
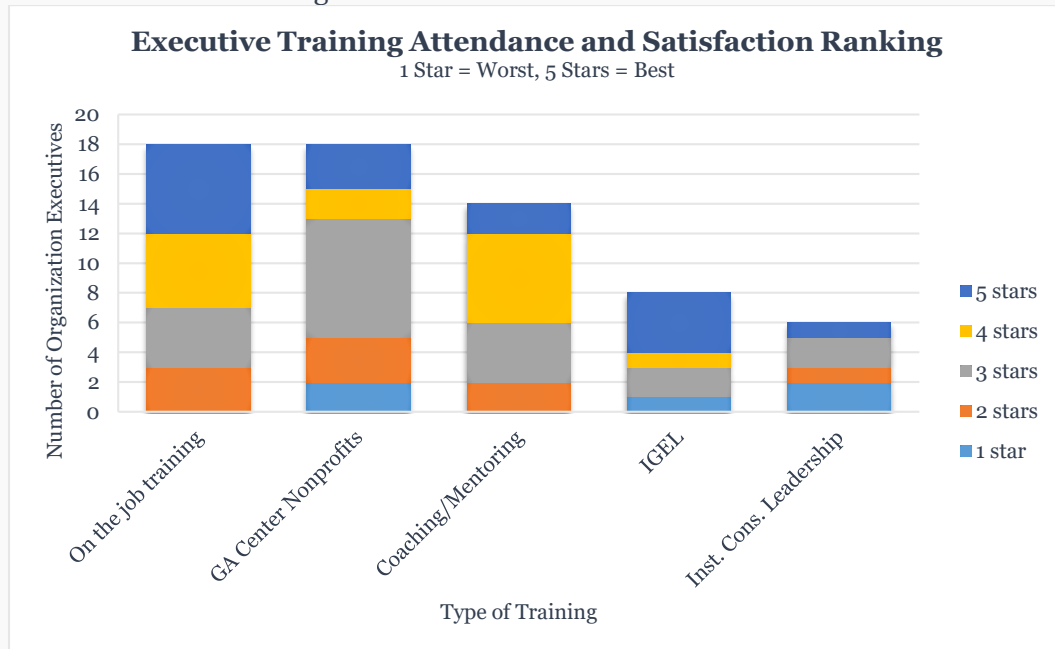
Organizations with Training and Leadership Development in Budget
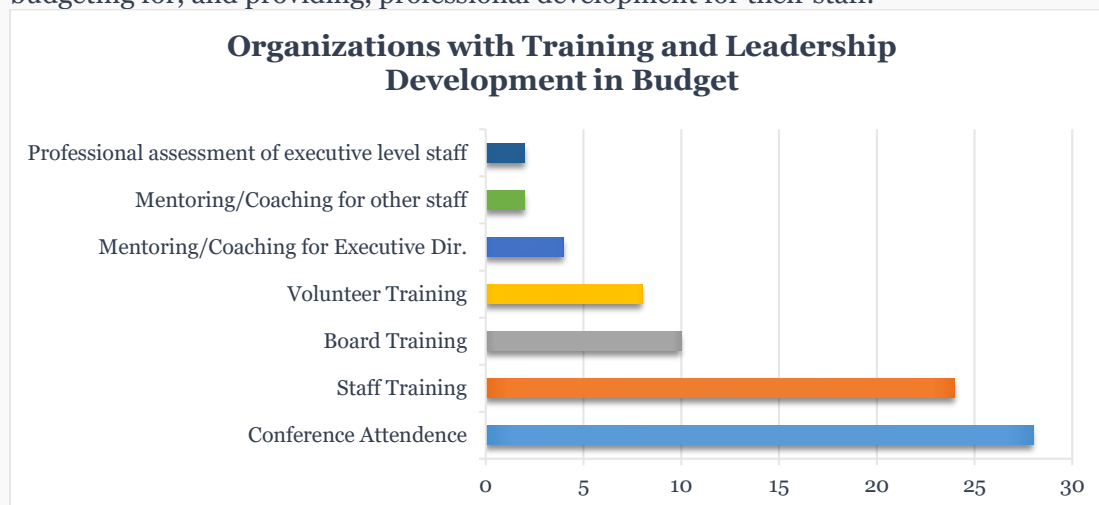
Source: Cohort Surveys

Regardless of tenure in their current position, executives reported a desire for building their skills in the following areas:

Executive Confidence in Leadership Skills

Legend:
- Confident
- Would benefit from skill-building
- Need to learn how
- Not confident

Categories (top to bottom): Training/Mentoring Board Members, Fundraising, Building Networks of Supporters, Influencing Decision Makers, Strategic Priorities, Hiring/Training Staff, Supervising Staff/Volunteers
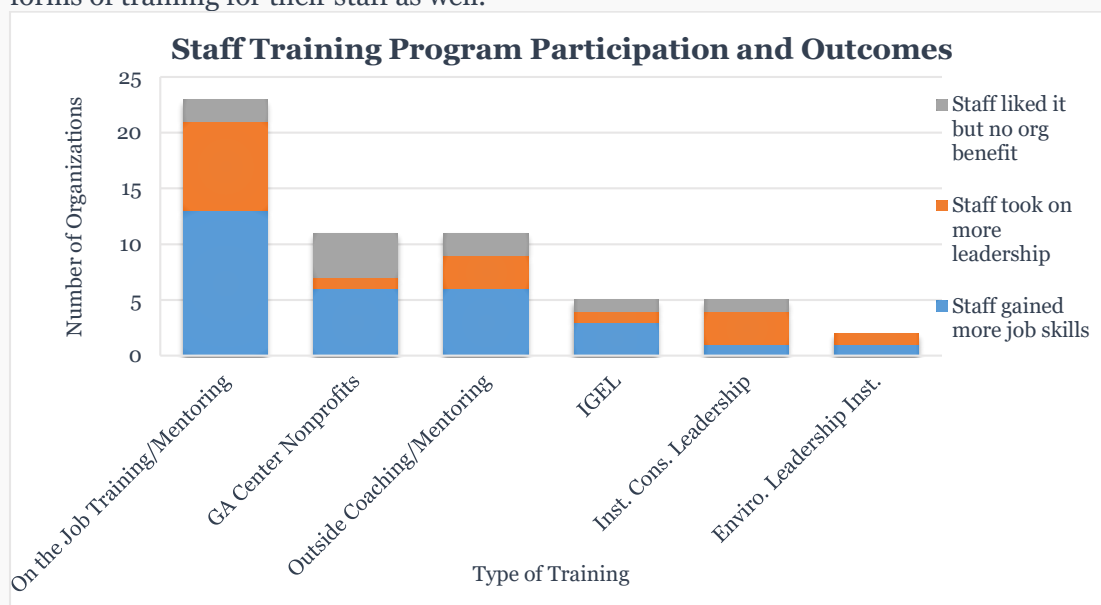
Source: Cohort Surveys

Organizations are investing funds, and executives are investing time, in executive training. Executives find on-the-job training and coaching/mentoring to be the most effective forms of training.

Executive Training Attendance and Satisfaction Ranking
1 Star = Worst, 5 Stars = Best

Legend:
- 5 stars
- 4 stars
- 3 stars
- 2 stars
- 1 star

Type of Training (x-axis): On the job training, GA Center Nonprofits, Coaching/Mentoring, IGEL, Inst. Cons. Leadership

Y-axis: Number of Organization Executives

Source: Cohort Surveys

Executives find on-the-job training and coaching/mentoring to be the most effective forms of training for their staff as well.
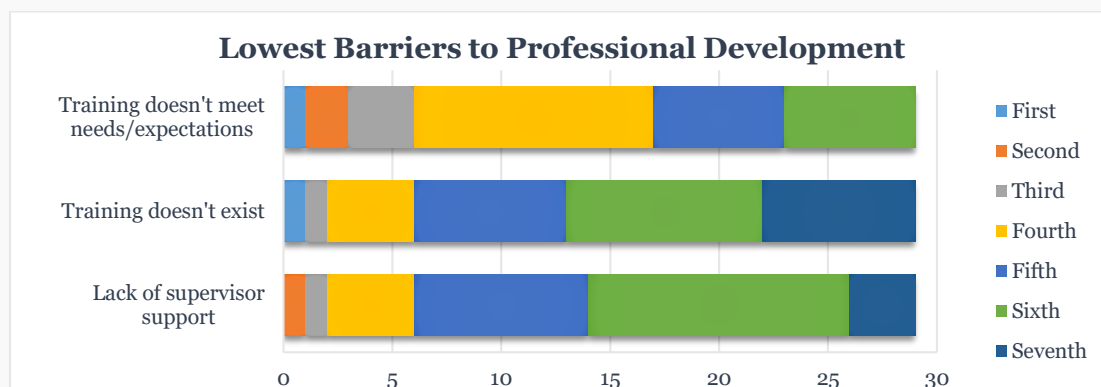
Staff Training Program Participation and Outcomes

Source: Cohort Surveys

Executives reported the largest barriers to leadership and professional development in their organizations to be time, cost, and higher-priority expenses.

Top Barriers to Profesional Development

Source: Cohort Surveys

Lowest Barriers to Professional Development
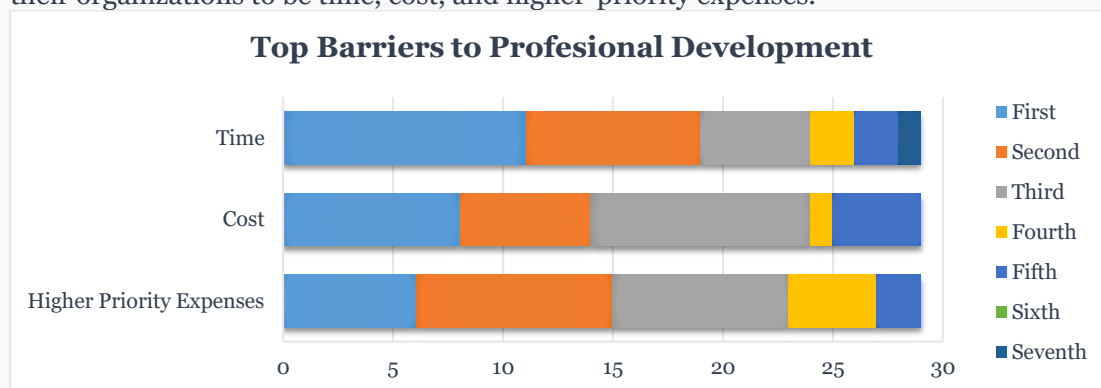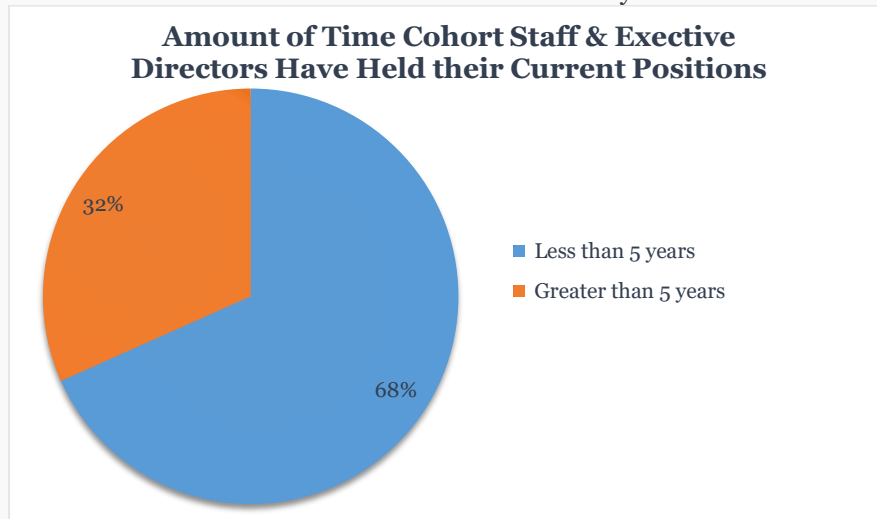

Source: Cohort Surveys

H. Career Advancement, Talent-Incubators, and Staff Tenure

Cohort organizations are serving as talent "incubators" and organizations in the sector are providing advancement opportunities for the sector's employees. Twenty-four organizations cited examples of staff and/or interns who went on to other positions within the sector after employment at their organization.
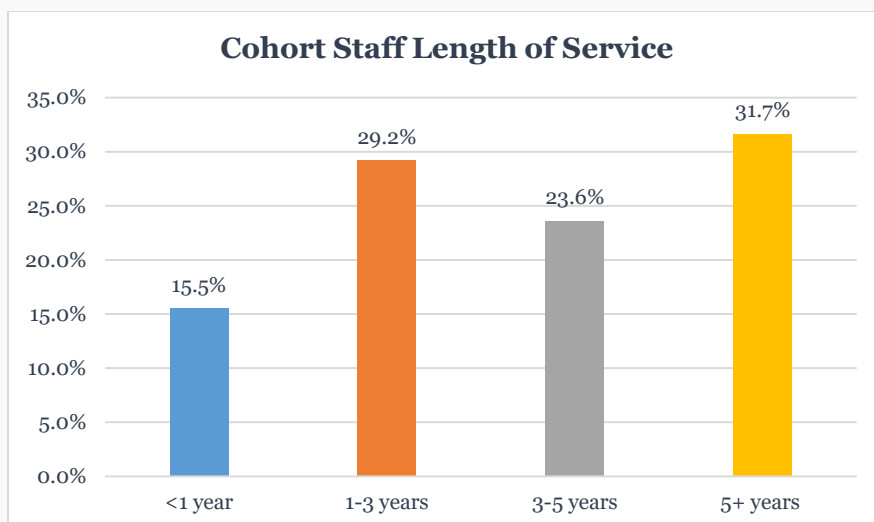
Cohort Staff Recruitment Sources
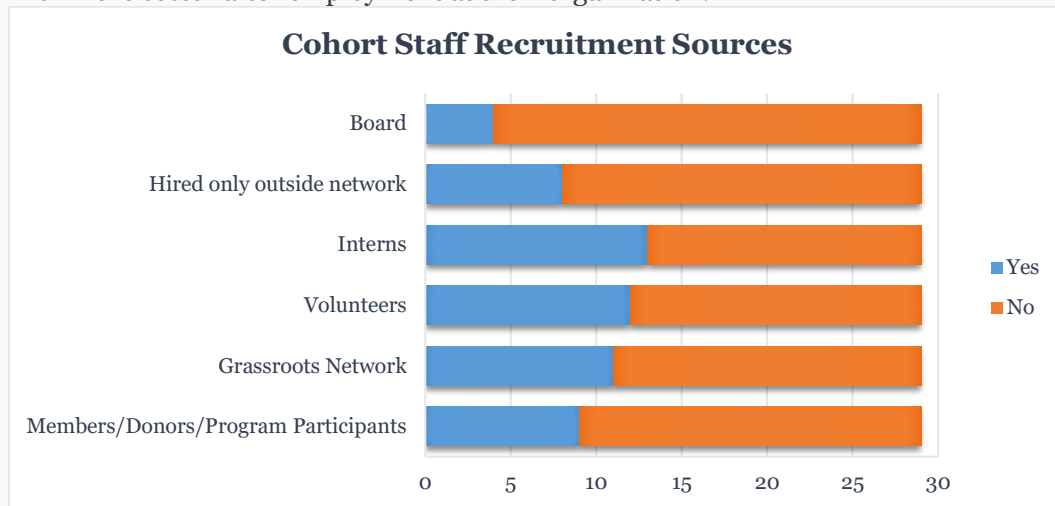
Source: Cohort Surveys

Cohort staff and executive directors have relatively short tenures with their organization.

Amount of Time Cohort Staff & Exective Directors Have Held their Current Positions

- Less than 5 years
- Greater than 5 years

32%

68%

Source: Cohort Surveys

Cohort Staff Length of Service

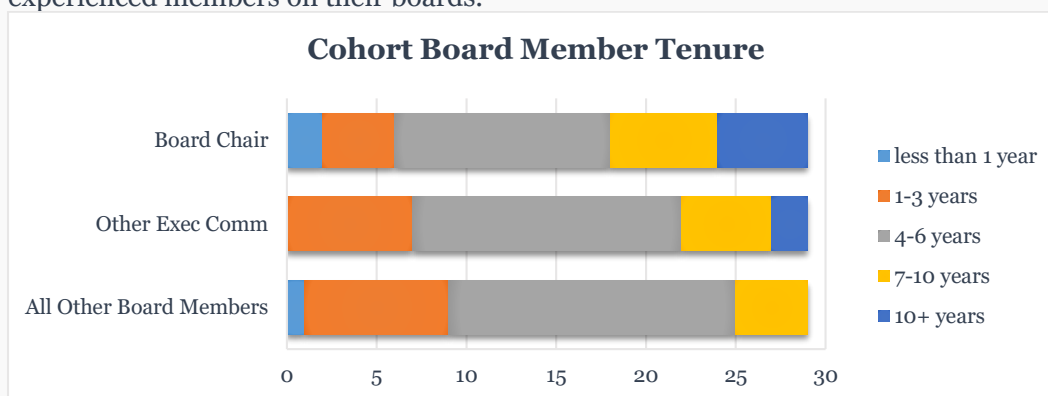| Length of Service	Percentage
<1 year	15.5%
1-3 years	29.2%
3-5 years	23.6%
5+ years	31.7%

Source: Cohort Surveys

These findings on tenure indicate either significant turnover in organizations or significant development of new staff positions. Further investigation is needed to understand the cause and effect.

I.   Boards of Directors

The majority of board members – including board chairs and executive committee members – have been on the board for 4-6 years. This data on board member tenure indicates that overall cohort organizations are maintaining a good balance of new-to-experienced members on their boards.

Cohort Board Member Tenure

Legend: less than 1 year, 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, 10+ years

Categories: Board Chair, Other Exec Comm, All Other Board Members

Source: Cohort Surveys

As reported above, the majority of organizations are not conducting evaluations of board performance. Board development garnered the least amount of executive directors' time. Executives also reported the least confidence in recruiting and mentoring board members with 16 reporting they would benefit from skill-building in this area, 2 reporting they need to learn this skill, and 2 reporting they were not confident with this skill. Only 10 out of 29 organizations include board training in their budgets.

J. Organizational Constraints and Capacity Needs

The vast majority of executives identified funding and staffing as their greatest organizational capacity needs and lack of funding and staff and time as their greatest organizational constraints.

No single capacity need was identified by a majority of stakeholders. However, 13 stakeholders did identify funding as a capacity need.

Areas of Key Demand

Executives provided information on the types of programming their organization offers and the estimated participation in each area. Executives ranked their organization's programming in terms of demand from their respective constituencies.
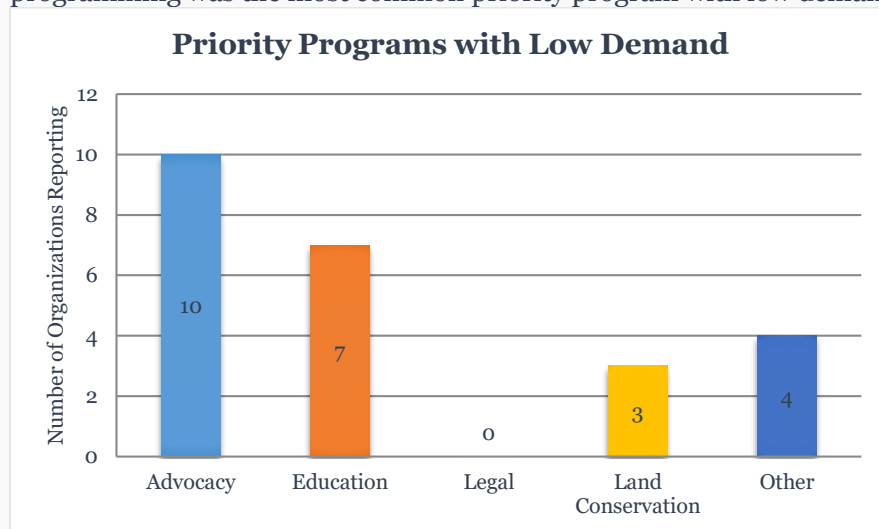
Education	• 86% of the cohort offers education programming • Estimated over 100,000 participants annually • Ranked as the greatest programming demand
Advocacy	• 66% of the cohort offers advocacy programming • Approximately 46,000 participants annually • Second ranked in programming demand
Land Protection	• 22% of the cohort offers land protection programming • Estimated 22,000 participants annually • Third ranked programming demand
Legal	• 17% of the cohort offers legal programming • Estimated 1,000 participants annually • Fourth ranked programming demand

Source: Cohort survey

The cohort provides services to a large variety of audiences (29 different audience groups were identified). The most common audiences served are:
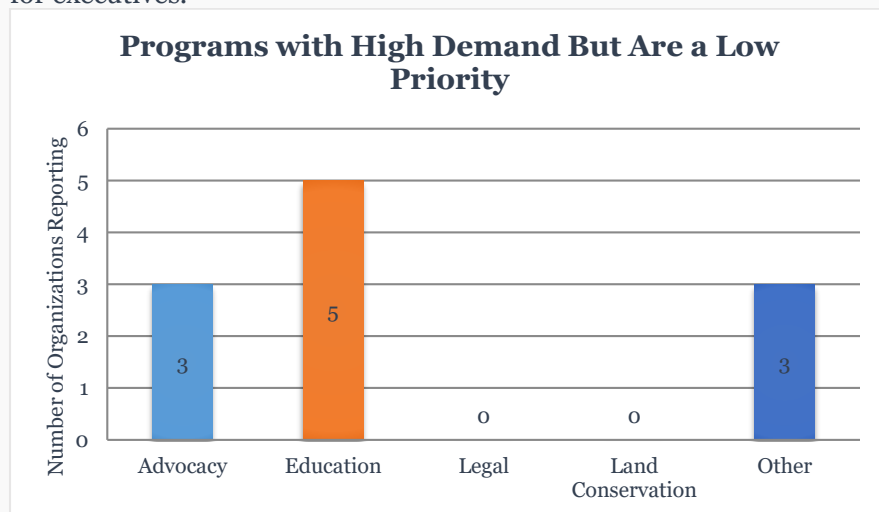
- Agencies – 19 organizations
- Elected Officials – 16 organizations
- Youth – 16 organizations
- All – 14 organizations
- Outdoorsmen/women – 14 organizations
- Families – 13 organizations

Executives were also asked if they had programs that were a strategic priority for their organization but were in low demand or had low participation rates. Advocacy programming was the most common priority program with low demand.

Priority Programs with Low Demand

Number of Organizations Reporting

Advocacy	Education	Legal	Land Conservation	Other
10	7	0	3	4

Source: Cohort Surveys

Executives were also asked if they had programs that were in high demand by their audiences but were not a strategic priority for their organization. Education programming was the most common program area with high demand, but low priority for executives.

Programs with High Demand But Are a Low Priority

Number of Organizations Reporting

Advocacy	Education	Legal	Land Conservation	Other
3	5	0	0	3

Source: Cohort Surveys

Programmatic Gaps

When asked what programs they need or want to provide but currently do not, the vast majority of executives (27) reported that their organization does not need new programs but rather needs the ability to reach more people/entities/locations with their current programs.

When asked what programmatic gaps they have identified within the overall sector, executives identified several different needs. While not identified by a majority of

executives or stakeholders, many interviewees reported the need to increase diversity and broaden involvement in the sector. At least fifteen (15) organizations and thirteen (13) stakeholders identified the need to grow the number of people involved in the sector and increase diversity and extend the reach and appeal of the sector to broader audiences than are currently engaged. Three (3) executives identified the need within their own organization and fifteen (15) executives identified the need for the sector as a whole. Executives further identified the need to be more inclusive of different interests and viewpoints, including:

- Rural/urban
- Conservative/progressive
- Republican/Democrat
- Health community
- People of color

The need to broaden and diversify leaders and supporters extended to the organizations themselves (staff and boards), programs and program participants, engagement in advocacy and elections, and the sector as a whole.

While not identified by a majority of executives or stakeholders, at least seven (7) executives and fifteen (15) stakeholders identified the need to increase collaboration between organizations in the sector. Three (3) executives identified the need within their own organization and seven (7) identified the need for the sector as a whole. Fifteen (15) stakeholders identified the need in general and fourteen (14) identified the need specifically as a coordinated advocacy need. Collaboration needs identified included:

- The need for an unencumbered convener to assemble organizations and facilitate coordination and collaboration within the sector on policy issues, as well as sector-wide issues like diversity
- Provide and maintain a database of organizations, programs, events, etc.
- Provide aggregated services for the sector
- Land Trusts were a particular segment of the sector that was identified as needing more coordination

Programmatic Overlap

When asked where they see programmatic overlap with their own programs or throughout the sector, the majority of executives reported that they did not see any major overlap. While many organizations were working on the same issues or offering similar programs or services, most reported that they had carved out specific niches to meet specific needs or serve specific audiences. The majority of stakeholders also reported that they did not see any major overlap but instead see organizations serving specific niches.

A majority of organizations are providing education and advocacy programs and serving similar audiences. It is likely that the programs are meeting specific needs and serving different audiences. Additionally, the reported demand for education programming correlates with what organizations are providing. However, education programming may be an area where there are opportunities to free-up capacity and resources by coordinating, and perhaps aggregating, education program development and delivery.
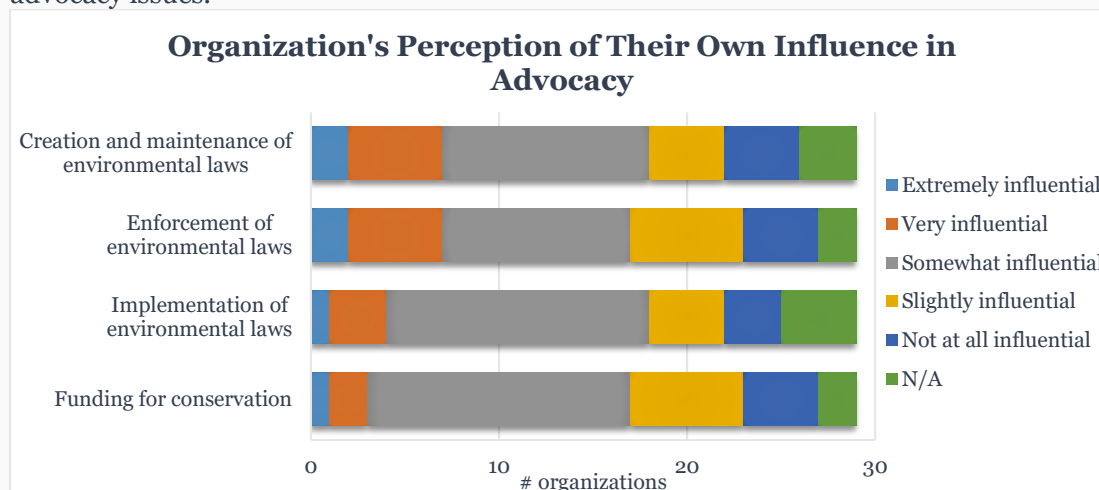
Coordinated Advocacy Efforts

Executives reported their organizations were most likely to participate in advocacy through their participation in coalitions (20 of the cohort organizations are members of

the Georgia Water Coalition) and by asking their supporters to contact elected officials about issues.
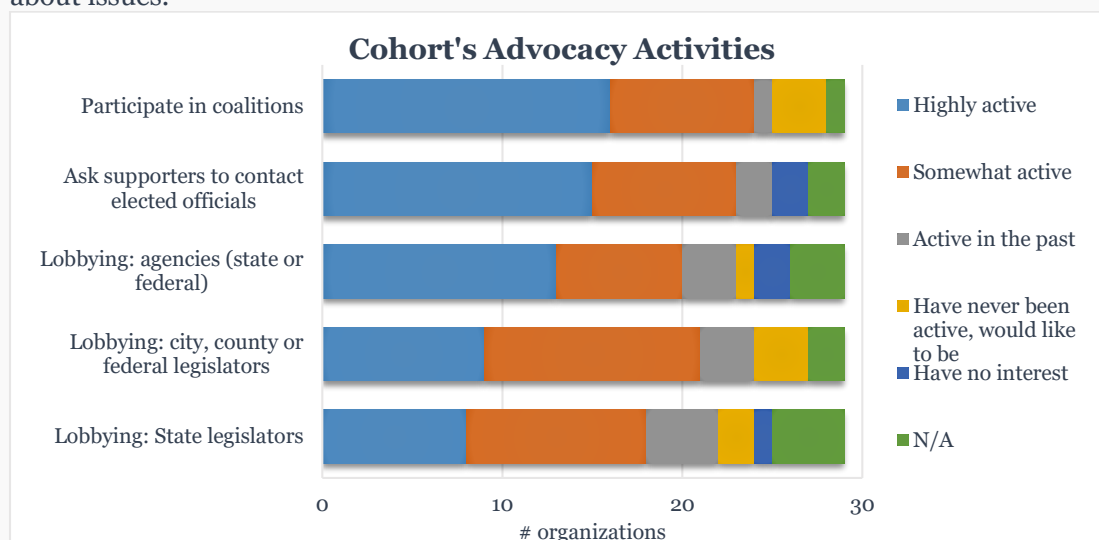
Cohort's Advocacy Activities

Source: Cohort Survey

The majority of executives ranked their own organization as "somewhat" influential on advocacy issues.

Organization's Perception of Their Own Influence in Advocacy

Source: Cohort Survey

The majority of executives ranked the sector as "very" to "somewhat" influential on advocacy issues.

Perception of Sector's Influence on Advocacy
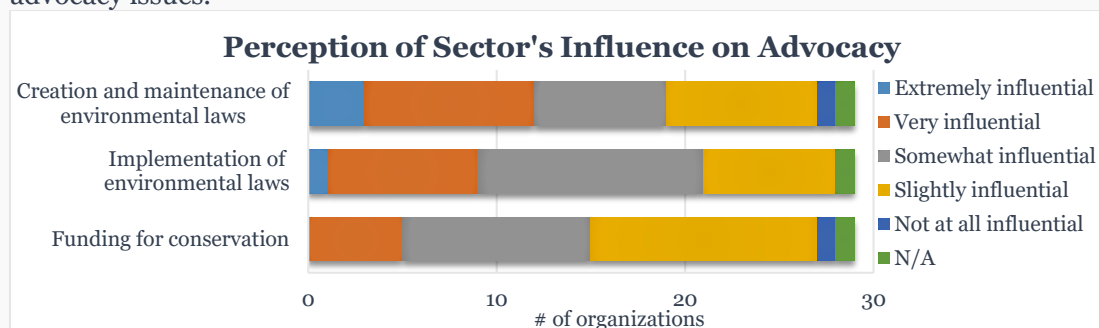
Source: Cohort Survey

Executives and stakeholders identified several issues that need coordinated advocacy efforts, but no issues were identified by a majority of executives or stakeholders. The top issues identified were:

- Energy/climate/air – 5 executives/6 stakeholders
- Land conservation – 4 executives/4 stakeholders
- Cross-sector issues – 3 executives/3 stakeholders

The types of efforts identified by executives and stakeholders to broaden support and influence included the need to:

- Frame issues to gain bi-partisan support
- Frame issues to be more encompassing of other issues such as health, justice, urban concerns, rural concerns, and hunting/fishing/outdoors issues
- Broaden strategies to include political strategies, grasstops strategies, greater mobilization of organization's networks, greater empowerment of organization's networks, and broadening and expanding networks – including strategies to collaborate and gain more support from the business sector
- Increase engagement with the legislature including:
  - More participation in caucus meetings
  - Strategies to educate and persuade legislators
  - One-on-one legislator briefings and relationship building between organization's networks and legislators
  - Briefing events targeted toward legislators
  - Framing issues so they are personal to decision makers
  - Build relationships with the legislators who never support sector issues and find out why
  - Offer opportunities for elected officials and decision makers to experience issues first-hand
 - Outreach that is personal and not "canned"

Election Efforts

Over 75% of the cohort thought that it is very or extremely important for the sector to influence issues discussed during elections. A smaller majority (55.2%) felt that it was very or extremely important for the sector to influence which candidates are elected. Despite these opinions on the importance of elections in regards to their issues, relatively few executives reported their organizations are actively involved in activities related to elections. A slim majority (52%) of the cohort reported some activity around candidate education. Only 31% of the cohort reported actively working to make conservation issues into election campaign issues.
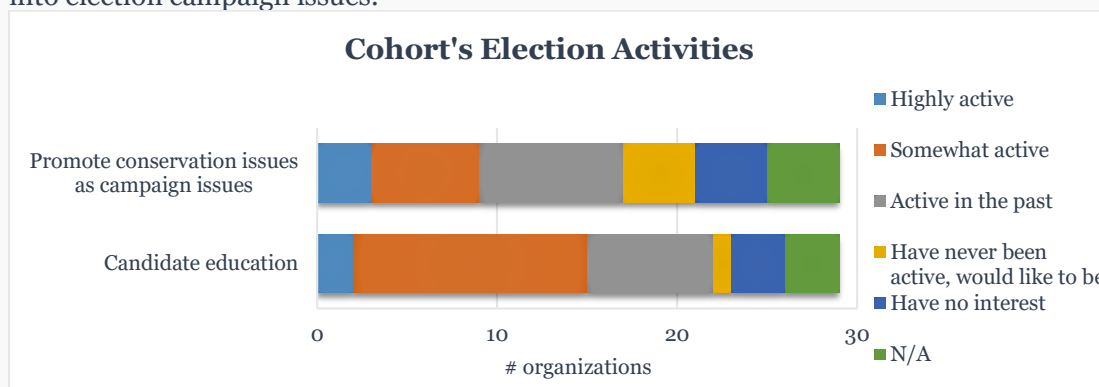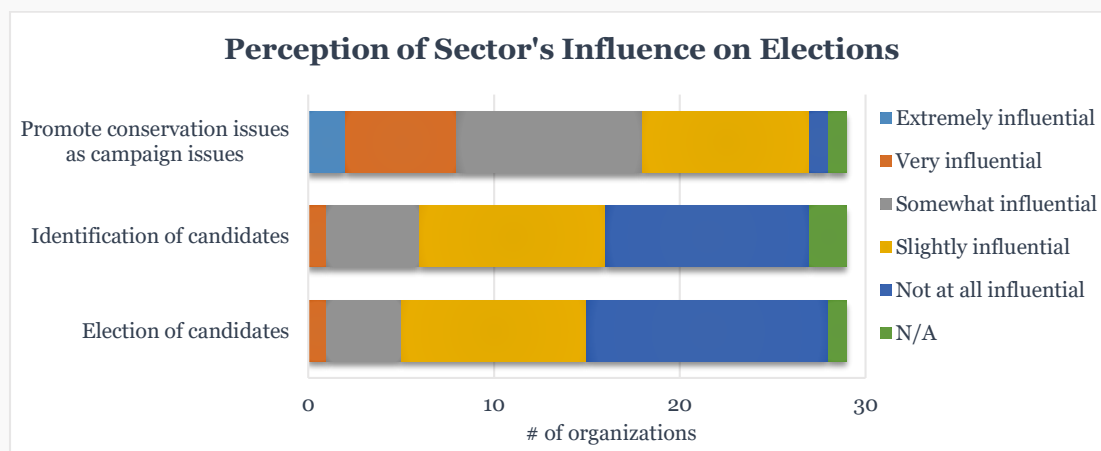

Source: Cohort Survey

This lack of activity is reflected in the cohorts' perceptions of their own and the sector's influence on elections.

Perception of Their Own Influence in Elections

Perception of Sector's Influence on Elections
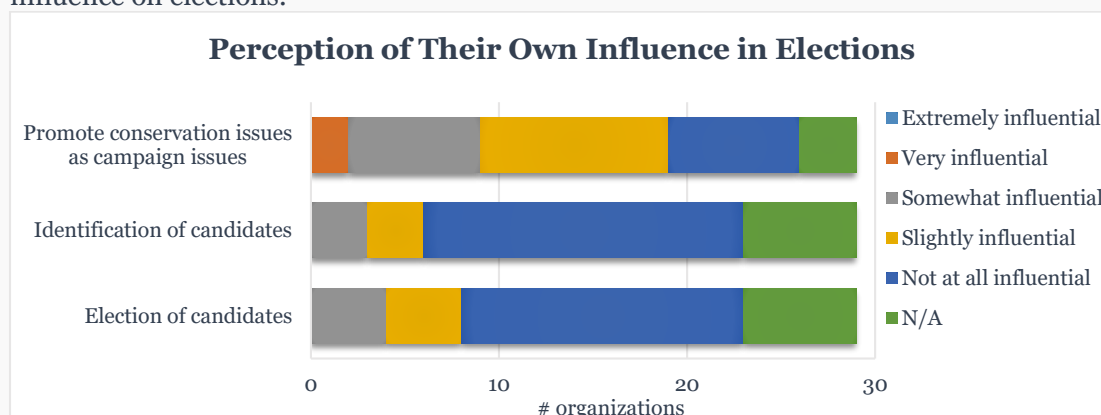
The vast majority of executives (31 executives) identified the need for more 501c4 election efforts to support sector-wide conservation issues. A majority of stakeholders (21 stakeholders) also identified the need for more 501c4 election efforts to support conservation and the environment issues.

Appendix 1: Process and Methodology

Database:

During the first phase of the project, the consultants conducted an exhaustive search of organizations that have filed a 990 tax return within the last 1-2 years and are operating in Georgia with an environmental and/or conservation mission, resulting in 458 organizations identified. The consultants created a searchable database with a record for each organization along with available data on contact information, mission, employer identification number (EIN), budget, number of staff, compensation range for top executive, 501c IRS tax category, issues addressed, and scope.

Assessment:

In consultation with the funders, a research cohort of 39 organizations was selected from a cross-section of the sector to collect enhanced data from to conduct the assessment. The consultants began with a list of all organizations with a budget of $100,000+, resulting in 170 organizations. This group was then broken out by budget size, issues addressed & scope of area covered (local, watershed, statewide, regional, national, and international) and a representative sample of 70 organizations was selected. The funders further narrowed the cohort to a list of 39 representative cross-sector organizations.

Thirty-six organizations participated in phone interviews and comprised the final cohort and 29 organizations in the cohort completed an online survey.

Research Cohort
* organization did not complete the survey
1. Altamaha Riverkeeper
2. American Rivers
3. Athens Land Trust
4. Atlanta Audubon
5. Center for a Sustainable Coast
6. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
7. Clean Air Campaign
8. Environment Georgia
9. Flint Riverkeeper
10. Flint RiverQuarium
11. Georgia Conservancy
12. Georgia Forest Watch
13. Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
14. Georgia Land Trust
15. Georgia Organics
16. Georgia River Network
17. Georgia Solar Energy Association*
18. Georgia WAND
19. Georgia Wildlife Federation
20. Greening Forward
21. Greening Youth*
22. Mothers and Others for Clean Air*
23. Mountain Conservation Trust*
24. National Wild Turkey Federation
25. Ogeechee Riverkeeper
26. One Hundred Miles*
27. Phinizy Center for Water Sciences*

28. Sandy Creek Nature Center
29. Satilla Riverkeeper
30. Savannah Riverkeeper
31. Sierra Club
32. Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance*
33. Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
34. Southern Conservation Trust
35. Southface
36. St. Simons Land Trust

The consultants notified members of the cohort that the information provided would not be confidential due to the funders requesting some collected data be added to the database (budget, methods, and scope data) and that the research notes would also be provided to the funders. However, the cohort was also told that their input would not be shared beyond the funders - only information in aggregate would be shared more broadly.

In consultation with the funders, a list of stakeholders was also developed to gather input from via phone interviews. Thirty-six stakeholders connected to the sector in a variety of ways participated in phone interviews. Stakeholders were told their feedback would be kept confidential and would only be provided in aggregate.

Stakeholders:
1. Abbot, Jim - several Boards of Directors
2. Adler, Judy - Turner Foundation
3. Barrow, Craig - philanthropist, conservationist
4. Benfield, Stephanie - City of Atlanta, former Greenlaw
5. Berlin, Barry - Kendeda Fund
6. Bowen, Phyllis - Sapelo Foundation
7. Bradshaw, Joel - Political and Organizational Consultant
8. Buckner, Debbie - Legislator, GA House of Representatives
9. Cook, Ernest - Trust for Public Land
10. Curtiss, Carrie - Conservation Colorado
11. Davenport, Hume - Southwings
12. Davis, Deron - The Nature Conservancy
13. Elder, Don - Organizational Consultant
14. Feinberg, Emily - Waterkeeper Alliance
15. Flynn, Cormac - former League of Conservation Voters, consultant
16. Fowler, Laurie - UGA River Basin Center
17. Funderburk, Stacy - Conservation Fund
18. Harden, Russ and Eric Johnson - Woodruff Foundation
19. Jordan, Ben - Coca-Cola, several Boards of Directors
20. Langley, Bert - Georgia Environmental Protection Division
21. Lanier, John - Anderson Foundation
22. Lee, Shannon - Conservation Fund
23. Meezan, Erin - Interface
24. Passmore, Sam - Mott Foundation
25. Randolph, Dawn - former Chair of Georgia Conservation Voters, consultant
26. Rippeon, Hope - League of Conservation Voters
27. Robinson, Andy - Fundraising Consultant
28. Seydel, Rutherford - several Boards of Directors
29. Shock, Andrew - Conservation Fund
30. Sibley, John - several organizations
31. Timberlake, Ann - South Carolina Conservation Voters

32. Tisdale, Chet - King & Spalding, several Boards of Directors
33. Tucker, Sandy - US Fish and Wildlife Service, retired
34. Turner, Jud - Georgia Environmental Protection Division
35. Webb, Brad - Organizational Consultant
36. Weitnauer, David - Dobbs Foundation

Appendix 2: State of the Sector Data

The following is additional data used in the Executive Summary and State of Sector analysis. Only responses provided by two or more executives or stakeholders are included, single responses were not included for the sake brevity.

Cohort Organizational Capacity Data

Capacity Needs
Organizations' capacity needs identified by the cohort for their own organization
- Funding – 32 organizations
- Staff – 30 organizations
- Skills – 10 organizations
- Board – 9 organizations
- Expertise – 9 organizations
- Volunteers – 7 organizations
- Technology – 6 organizations
- Facilities – 5 organizations
- Influence – 5 organizations
- Resources – 4 organizations
- Equipment – 3 organizations
- Leadership – 3 organizations
- Training – 3 organizations
- Collaboration – 2 organizations
- Research – 2 organizations
- Support – 2 organizations
- Supporters – 2 organizations
- Time – 2 organizations

Sector-wide capacity needs identified by the cohort
- Funding – 16 organizations
- Influence – 8 organizations
- Staff – 8 organizations
- Collaboration – 7 organizations
- Training – 7 organizations
- Expertise – 5 organizations
- Resources – 5 organizations
- Skills – 5 organizations
- Board – 4 organizations
- Leadership – 3 organizations
- Clearinghouse – 2 organizations
- Communications – 2 organizations
- Tools – 2 organizations

Stakeholder feedback on sector-wide capacity needs
- Funding – 13 stakeholders
- Skills – 13 stakeholders
- Board development – 8 stakeholders
- Coordination – 8 stakeholders

- Strategic planning/strategy – 6 stakeholders
- Influence – 5 stakeholders
- Staff – 5 stakeholders
- Base of support – 4 stakeholders
- Communications – 4 stakeholders
- Capacity building – 3 stakeholders
- Expertise – 3 stakeholders
- Diversity – 2 stakeholders
- Experience – 2 stakeholders
- Resources – 2 stakeholders
- Technology – 2 stakeholders
- Vision – 2 stakeholders

Organizational constraints identified by the cohort
- Funding – 28 organizations
- Time – 19 organizations
- Staff – 8 organizations
- Skills – 5 organizations
- Priorities – 4 organizations
- Board – 3 organizations
- Influence – 3 organizations
- Leadership – 3 organizations
- Political landscape – 3 organizations
- Expertise – 2 organizations
- Leadership Development – 2 organizations
- Succession – 2 organizations

Leadership and Leadership Development Data
Other trainings attended:
- Association of Nature Center Administrators, National Association for Interpretation
- Conservation Finance Workshop at Yale
- Internal organizational training
- LEAD Atlanta
- Building a Movement Institute
- Young Women's Leadership Development Program
- Leadership AL
- Leadership North Fulton
- Regional Leadership Institute
- Leadership Atlanta
- Online courses/webinars/books
- Waterkeeper Alliance online trainings

How cohort is doing leadership development
- Training programs – 22 organizations
- Mentoring – 11 organizations
- On the job training – 10 organizations
- Coaching – 9 organizations
- Conference attendance – 6 organizations
- Networking – 5 organizations
- Providing resources – 4 organizations

- Peer-to-peer – 3 organizations

Barriers to Leadership Development
- Time – 21 organizations
- Funding – 18 organizations
- Priorities – 15 organizations
- Qualifications/experience to take on leadership roles – 8 organizations
- Compensation – 6 organizations
- Location – 4 organizations
- No training provided – 4 organizations
- Training that meets needs – 4 organizations
- Board roles and responsibilities – 3 organizations
- Retention – 3 organizations
- Staff size – 3 organizations
- Low opportunities for advancement – 2 organizations

Stakeholder feedback on leadership development needs
- Make leadership development a priority – 14 stakeholders
- Develop leadership skills – 12 stakeholders
- Succession planning – 11 stakeholders
- Shared leadership – 6 stakeholders
- Support leadership development – 6 stakeholders
- Better compensation/pay – 5 stakeholders
- Adapt to generational differences – 4 stakeholders
- Adjust expectations – 4 stakeholders
- Improved hiring practices – 3 stakeholders
- Use leadership transitions as opportunities – 3 stakeholders
- More advancement opportunities – 2 stakeholders
- Attract more talent – 2 stakeholders
- Provide more autonomy – 2 stakeholders
- Improve diversity – 2 stakeholders
- Sustain hierarchy – 2 stakeholders
- Support for leadership development in rural organizations – 2 stakeholders

Cohort Key Demands Data

Programs currently provided by organizations in the cohort
- Advocacy
  - Policy advocacy – 19 organizations
  - Address issues – 11 organizations
  - Monitoring – 8 organizations
  - Enforcement – 2 organizations
  - Protection of critical resources – 2 organizations
- Education
  - Outreach – 13 organizations
  - Education – 12 organizations
  - Outings – 8 organizations
  - School Programs – 2 organizations
  - Curriculum – 1 organization
  - Nature Center – 1 organization
  - Library – 1 organization

- Technical Assistance
    - Technical Assistance – 8 organizations
    - Training – 6 organizations
    - Capacity Building – 1 organizations
    - Convening – 4 organizations
    - Directory – 1 organization
- Land Conservation
    - Land Conservation – 7 organizations
    - Land Stewardship – 1 organization
- Restoration
    - Clean Ups – 4 organizations
    - Restoration – 2 organizations
    - Invasives – 1 organization
- Community Development
    - Community Agriculture – 1 organization
    - Community building – 1 organization
    - Affordable housing – 1 organization
    - Community planning – 1 organization
    - Community service – 1 organization
    - Neighborhood revitalization – 1 organization
- Services
    - Merchandise – 2 organizations
    - Equipment rental – 1 organization
    - Financing – 1 organization
    - Inspections – 1 organization
- Elections
    - 501c4 activity – 3 organizations
    - Civic engagement – 1 organization

Audiences currently served by organizations in the cohort
- Agencies – 19 organizations
- Elected Officials – 16 organizations
- Youth – 16 organizations
- All – 14 organizations
- Outdoors people – 14 organizations
- Families – 13 organizations
- Business - 9 organizations
- Environmental NGOs - 6 organizations
- Farmers - 6 organizations
- Landowners - 6 organizations
- Media - 5 organizations
- Environmentalists - 4 organizations
- Schools - 3 organizations
- Affected communities - 2 organizations
- Consumers - 2 organizations
- Health organizations - 2 organizations
- Members - 2 organizations
- Underserved - 2 organizations
- Young adult - 2 organizations

Cohort Programmatic Gaps Data

Programs organizations in the cohort would like to provide but currently do not

- Nothing new, just the ability to have more "reach" with current programs – 27 organizations
- Broaden to new audiences – 3 organizations
- More expertise – 3 organizations
- Address new or additional issues – 3 organizations
- Participate in policy making – 3 organizations
- Land conservation programs – 2 organizations
- Outreach programs – 2 organizations

Programs organizations in the cohort want/need the sector to provide

- Address new or additional issues – 10 organizations
- More diversity – 8 organizations
- Broaden to new audiences – 7 organizations
- More collaboration – 7 organizations
- More convening – 5 organizations
- More organizations – 4 organizations
- More policy issues addressed – 4 organizations
- More education programs – 3 organizations
- More expertise – 3 organizations
- More c4 activity – 2 organizations
- More focus on effective communications – 2 organizations
- More grassroots efforts – 2 organizations
- More green infrastructure programs – 2 organizations
- Nothing new, just the ability to have more "reach" with current programs – 2 organizations

Stakeholder feedback on programmatic gaps

- Collaboration/coordination with other organizations and stakeholders – 15 stakeholders
- Broaden to new audiences – 13 stakeholders
- More energy-climate-air issue work – 11 stakeholders
- More "reach" with current programs – 5 stakeholders
- More strategic approaches – 4 stakeholders
- More small legal cases – 3 stakeholders
- More land conservation – 2 stakeholders
- More remediation work – 2 stakeholders
- More transportation issue work – 2 stakeholders
- More water issue work – 2 stakeholders

Stakeholder feedback on programmatic priorities

- Energy-air-climate issues – 5 stakeholders
- Water issues – 5 stakeholders
- Coordination between organizations and stakeholders – 4 stakeholders
- Enforcement of policies and regulations – 2 stakeholders
- Land conservation – 2 stakeholders

Cohort Programmatic Overlap Data

Overlap or duplication of programs or services identified by organizations in the cohort:

- Education – 6 organizations
- Land trusts – 5 organizations
- Outings – 5 organizations
- Coast – 4 organizations
- More Coordination – 4 organizations
- Legal – 3 organizations
- Advocacy – 2 organizations
- Air – 2 organizations
- Energy – 2 organizations
- Policy – 2 organizations

Overlap or duplication of programs or services identified by stakeholders
- While there is overlap, organizations have carved out niches – 6 stakeholders
- Water – 5 stakeholders
- Education – 3 stakeholders
- Land Conservation – 3 stakeholders
- Generally, yes – 3 stakeholders
- Coast – 2 stakeholders

Cohort Advocacy Data

Cohort organizations and stakeholders identified several other issues that needed coordinated advocacy efforts, but no issues were identified by a majority of organizations. The top issues identified were:
- Energy/climate/air – 5 organizations/6 stakeholders
- Land conservation – 4 organizations/4 stakeholders
- Cross-sector issues – 3 organizations/3 stakeholders

Executives and stakeholders identified the following types of efforts that are needed to broaden support and influence of the sector:
- Frame issues to gain bi-partisan support
- Frame issues to be more encompassing of other issues such as health, justice, urban concerns, rural concerns, and hunting/fishing/outdoors issues
- Broaden strategies to include political strategies, grasstops strategies, greater mobilization of our networks, greater empowerment of our networks, and broadening and expanding networks – including strategies to collaborate and gain more support from the business sector
- Increase engagement with the legislature including:
  o more participation in caucus meetings
  o strategies to educate and persuade legislators
  o one-on-one legislator briefings and relationship building between our networks and legislators
  o briefing events targeted toward legislators
  o framing issues so they are personal to decision makers
  o build relationships with the legislators who never support our issues and find out why
  o offer opportunities for elected officials and decision makers to experience issues first-hand, and
  o outreach that is personal and not "canned."

Coalitions or coordinated advocacy issues the cohort reported they are currently participating in

- Georgia Water Coalition – 20 organizations
- Coal Ash – 6 organizations
- Palmetto Pipeline – 6 organizations
- Coastal – 5 organizations
- Clean Power Plan – 4 organizations
- Pro Georgia – 3 organizations
- Solar Bill – 3 organizations
- ACF Stakeholders – 2 organizations
- Georgia Environmental Justice Alliance – 2 organizations
- Georgia Legacy – 2 organizations
- Georgians for Smart Energy – 2 organizations
- Jekyll Development – 2 organizations
- Proposed reservoirs – 2 organizations
- Proposed Camden Co. Spaceport – 2 organizations
- Forty-nine (49) other issues were identified that organizations were currently participating in coalitions on or coordinating on

Issues the cohort identified that coalitions or coordinated advocacy are needed for:
- Energy/climate/air – 5 organizations
- Land conservation – 4 organizations
- Cross-sector issues – 3 organizations
- Health issues – 2 organizations
- The ability to do more with current efforts – 2 organizations
- Public ownership of wildlife – 2 organizations

Operational needs identified by the cohort to improve the efficacy of coordinated advocacy efforts
- More coordination, especially with local partners – 4 organizations
- Let partners know who is taking the lead on what – 2 organizations
- Make efforts more bi-partisan – 2 organizations
- Make efforts more proactive – 2 organizations

Stakeholder feedback on issues that coalitions or coordinated advocacy are needed for
- Energy – 6 stakeholders
- Land conservation – 4 stakeholders
- Cross-sector – 3 stakeholders
- The ability to do more with current efforts – 3 stakeholders
- Transportation – 2 stakeholders

Stakeholder feedback on operational needs to improve the efficacy of coordinated advocacy efforts
- More collaboration/coordination – 14 stakeholders
- Increase influence – 9 stakeholders
- Improved communication – 4 stakeholders
- Improved credibility – trust – 4 stakeholders
- Build relationships – 4 stakeholders
- More cooperation – 3 stakeholders
- More inclusivity – 3 stakeholders
- A convener – 2 stakeholders
- More outreach to legislators – 2 stakeholders
- More strategy – 2 stakeholders

Cohort Election Activity Data

Needs identified by the cohort related to 501c4 efforts within the sector

- Additional 501c4s are needed – 31 organizations
- Existing 501c4s can cover needs – 6 organizations

Stakeholder feedback on 501c4 efforts needed within the sector

- Additional 501c4s are needed – 21 stakeholders
- Unsure – 3 stakeholders

501c4 activity input provided by executives and stakeholders

- 501c4 efforts must be done "right." No consensus on what "right" looks like.
- There was no consensus on how 501c4 efforts should be configured and there were varied opinions on if it should or should not be done through a centralized organization (like a GCV), if more 501c3 organizations should add 501c4s to their organizations, or if the sector should bolster the efforts of existing 501c4s.
- There was agreement on what was needed to build the sector's political power:
    - There was little to no support for *SPECIFICALLY* reviving Georgia Conservation Voters to do the needed 501c4 work
    - There are significant barriers to overcome and needs that must be met in order for a 501c4 effort to be successful, such as:
        - securing adequate funding,
        - correctly structuring leadership, and
        - developing a truly bipartisan effort
        - There is also a need to grow, broaden, and diversify the audiences that 501c4 efforts are targeted towards, and ensure that it is truly bi-partisan and incorporates issues more people relate to such as: health, economy/jobs, food, security, equity, housing, property value/rights, consumer choice, recreation/hunting/fishing, faith

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REPORT from the Field

Findings and Recommendations to Support Georgia's Environmental Nonprofit Sector in Meeting Tomorrow's Challenges and Opportunities

May 2017

Produced by Chandra Brown and April Ingle

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Executive Summary

The R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation, Kendeda Fund, the Sapelo Foundation, the Turner Foundation and a foundation that wishes to remain anonymous commissioned an assessment of Georgia's Environmental Nonprofit Sector to better understand the organizational capacity and performance of Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector (the Sector). This report explores the key factors that will enable the Sector to continue to grow and strengthen to meet tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

Through a 4-phase process of data collection and analysis, leaders in the Sector identified four key areas to advance the success of the Sector: building participation and philanthropic support, increasing engagement and diversity, sustaining and building the Sector's professional core, and sustaining and building board leadership. This report is the culmination of this process and outlines key findings and recommendations in these four priority areas.

Priority Area 1: Building Participation and Philanthropic Support

Expanding and broadening the Sector's base of supporters emerged as a major need and a significant opportunity to grow the Sector's influence and financial capacity. When it comes to the number of households that donate to wildlife and environment causes, Georgia lags behind all other states in the region. Also, nationally, donors give to environment and nature protection organizations at lower rates than most other types of causes. There are also significant disparities in how different demographics support charities, and, in particular, environmental organizations.

Some organizations in the Sector also lack sufficient internal infrastructure, processes and programs needed to sustain philanthropic support.

The Sector could increase its base of support by identifying and employing strategies to ensure its programming is relevant to the diversity of communities it serves. The Sector could also engage and gain support from target audiences by investing in professional marketing and communications plans, branding and strategy. Finally, the Sector could grow and sustain philanthropic support by investing in organizational systems and planning.

Priority Area 2: Increasing Engagement and Diversity

Increasing diversity among staff, board members, and supporters also emerged as a major need and opportunity. Prioritizing and investing in the inclusion of diverse audiences is critical to ensuring relevance, impact and support of the Sector into the future. However, current engagement doesn't fully reflect the nation's, or Georgia's, changing demographics.

Lasting partnerships with new audiences and linked sectors could be forged by investing in collaborative, reciprocal relationships. The Sector could further increase engagement and diversity by prioritizing and operationalizing diversity,

equity and inclusion in all aspects of organizational management and investing in training for boards and staff.

Priority Area 3: Sustaining and Building the Sector's Professional Core

Sustaining and supporting the Sector's professional core was also identified as a significant need. The Sector has relatively short staff and executive tenures. Research points to several challenges related to recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff. Additionally, without sufficient leadership development strategies, the Sector is vulnerable to set-backs and leadership challenges when turnover does occur.

The Sector could build support for its professional core by investing in staff recruitment and retention strategies. Additionally, the Sector can build resiliency to turnover by investing in shared leadership and leadership development strategies.

Priority Area 4: Sustaining and Building Board Leadership

Developing improved board governance and robust organizational support from – and for - boards of directors was the final key area identified as a significant need and opportunity. Lack of staff confidence, skill and time, as well as resources, for board development has led to a lack of clear expectations, accountability, and understanding of roles and responsibilities for some Sector boards.

The Sector could sustain board leadership by actively integrating board roles into organizations. Further, the Sector could build board leadership by communicating clear expectations and developing and maintaining systems of board accountability.

Introduction

In 2014, the Funders commissioned this project to:

A. Develop a comprehensive database of all currently active nonprofit organizations operating in Georgia with an environmental mission
B. Conduct an assessment and report on the following questions:

- What is the state of Georgia's nonprofit environmental sector?
  - Does the Sector have the capacity to meet demands?
    - What - if any - capacity is lacking?
    - Is the Sector constrained by a lack of leadership development or other constraints?
  - Are there gaps and/or overlap in the programs and services the Sector provides?
  - Is the Sector constrained by lack of capacity, coordination, or declining influence on policy issues and/or elections?
  - Is there a need for an unencumbered convener for the Sector?

The funders hired consultants April Ingle and Chandra Brown (the consultants) to carry out this project.

Process

The findings and recommendations in this report were developed through a multi-phased process.

Phase 1: Sector-wide Data Collection and Database Development

Data from Guidestar and recent 990 IRS tax forms were collected and assessed to identify all nonprofit organizations in Georgia actively operating with an environmental mission. The data from Guidestar, 990 tax forms, and other online resources were compiled to create an online database of 458 organizations in Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector. Records in the database include the organization's name, contact information, issues addressed, budget size, number of full-time equivalents (FTEs), membership size and IRS 501 tax exempt category.

Phase 2: Research Cohort Identification and Enhanced Data Collection

To obtain more detailed and nuanced data about the sector, 36 organizations were selected to serve as a research cohort (Cohort).

A $100,000+ annual budget and full-time professional staff was determined as a threshold for inclusion in the Cohort in order to provide the most relevant data related to the project's key questions on organizational capacity. The Cohort was further narrowed to represent a cross-section of budget ranges, geographic scope, and issues addressed.

Leaders of the 36 Cohort organizations completed a telephone interview with the consultants, and 29 Cohort organizations completed an online survey, to provide detailed data for the project. Additionally, data was collected from a select group of Stakeholders.

Research Cohort Organizations

1. Altamaha Riverkeeper
2. American Rivers
3. Athens Land Trust
4. Atlanta Audubon
5. Center for a Sustainable Coast
6. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
7. Clean Air Campaign
8. Environment Georgia
9. Flint Riverkeeper
10. Flint RiverQuarium
11. Georgia Conservancy
12. Georgia Forest Watch
13. Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
14. Georgia Land Trust
15. Georgia Organics
16. Georgia River Network
17. Georgia Solar Energy Association
18. Georgia WAND
19. Georgia Wildlife Federation
20. Greening Forward
21. Greening Youth
22. Mothers and Others for Clean Air
23. Mountain Conservation Trust
24. National Wild Turkey Federation
25. Ogeechee Riverkeeper
26. One Hundred Miles
27. Phinizy Center for Water Sciences
28. Sandy Creek Nature Center
29. Satilla Riverkeeper
30. Savannah Riverkeeper
31. Sierra Club
32. Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance
33. Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
34. Southern Conservation Trust
35. Southface
36. St. Simons Land Trust

Phase 3: State of the Sector Assessment Report and Release

The data collected in Phases 1 and 2 were compiled into the *State of the Sector Assessment and Report*. The *State of the Sector Assessment and Report* was released to the Cohort members via webinar on January 16, 2016. During this webinar, the consultants provided an overview of the report findings and the Cohort provided feedback and identified areas of interest for further investigation. The following members of the Cohort and Funders volunteered to serve on a planning committee with the consultants to guide this investigation:

- Anne Blair, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
- Tonya Bonitatibus, Savannah Riverkeeper
- Phyllis Bowen, Sapelo Foundation
- Jennette Gayer, Environment Georgia
- George Kimberly, Mountain Conservation Trust
- Pam Young, Southern Conservation Trust

Phase 4: Research Cohort Roundtable Discussion

The planning committee and consultants determined that an in-person meeting to reflect on the Assessment's findings was a priority. To guide the conversation and provide additional insights, Marc Smiley, Principal at Solid Ground Consulting, was hired to co-facilitate and present pertinent data and information at the meeting alongside the consultants.

One executive and one board member from each of the Cohort organizations were invited to participate in the Georgia Environmental Nonprofit Roundtable on August 31, 2016.

Forty-seven staff and board members engaged in lively discussions and quiet reflections on the findings related to:
- Enhancing Engagement
- Increasing Diversity
- Developing Leaders
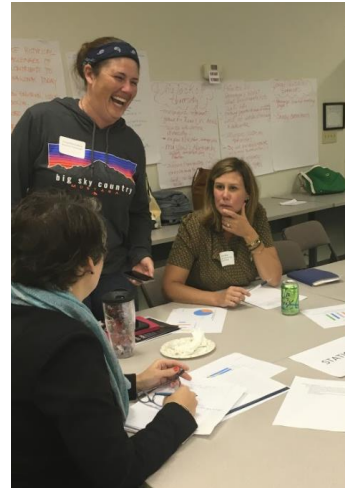
Findings and Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations are a synthesis of discussions at the Roundtable, surveys and interviews with the Cohort and Stakeholders, research, and observations gathered through consultations with nonprofit organizational experts.

Highlights

Data and feedback from stakeholders and Cohort executives revealed major achievements.

The Sector's executives are experienced and highly educated. The majority of executives in the Cohort hold graduate or professional level degrees and have more than 5 years of executive-level experience.

During the most recent economic downturn, the Cohort's fiscal management was strong, resulting in higher than average rates of budget surpluses when compared to the national average.

The Cohort's programs and services are in demand and making a difference throughout the state. The research identified no significant programmatic gaps, although many organizations identified the need to increase capacity to meet growing demand to reach more people, audiences or locales with their programs.

While some programmatic overlap was identified (particularly education programming), organizations are carving out specific niches with targeted audiences or programs.

Overarching Recommendations

Detailed recommendations are included for each of the four priority areas. However, it's important to highlight a few of these recommendations because of their overarching support of all four key priority areas: building participation and philanthropic support, increasing engagement and diversity, sustaining and building the Sector's professional core, and sustaining and building board leadership.

Overarching Recommendation #1: Invest in professional communications and marketing to ensure relevance of the Sector to the communities served

Investments in professionally developed marketing and communications plans, strategies, and branding will support all four key priority areas.

Overarching Recommendation #2: Grow collaborations and build partnerships and coalitions with new allies

Investments in building and growing collaborations, partnerships, and coalitions are also needed for all four key priority areas.

Also, investments in organizational planning and training for staff and boards were identified in all four key priority areas.

Priority Area 1: Building Participation and Philanthropic Support

Expanding and broadening the Sector's base of supporters emerged as a major need and an opportunity. As noted above, executives and stakeholders did not identify significant programmatic gaps or programmatic overlap. However, Cohort executives identified a need to reach more people, locations, and entities with their current program offerings.

A key component of building the organizational capacity needed to expand the reach of programs and engagement is building charitable support. There appears to be significant opportunities to grow investment in the Sector by increasing individual donations from Georgians.

Key Insights from the Data

Georgia has the second highest ratio of residents to environmental nonprofits in the region, and therefore fewer organizations competing for donor support per capita than most surrounding states. Only Alabama has a higher ratio of residents to environmental organizations.

 # Residents Per Environmental Organization

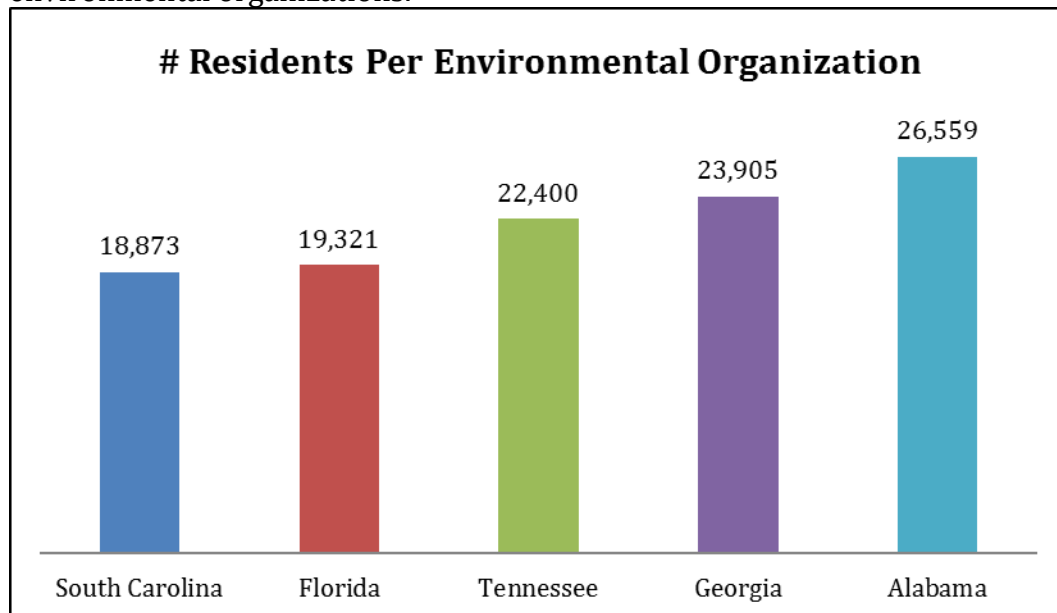| South Carolina	Florida	Tennessee	Georgia	Alabama
18,873	19,321	22,400	23,905	26,559

Figure 1. Sources: US Census. NCCS Core File (Public Charities) The Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics

However, households in Georgia donate to wildlife and environment causes at a lower rate than other states in the region and nationally.

Percent of Households Donating to Wildlife and Environment Causes

Georgia	Alabama	Florida	South Carolina	North Carolina	Tennessee	USA
3.65%	3.86%	3.87%	4.08%	4.11%	4.20%	4.99%
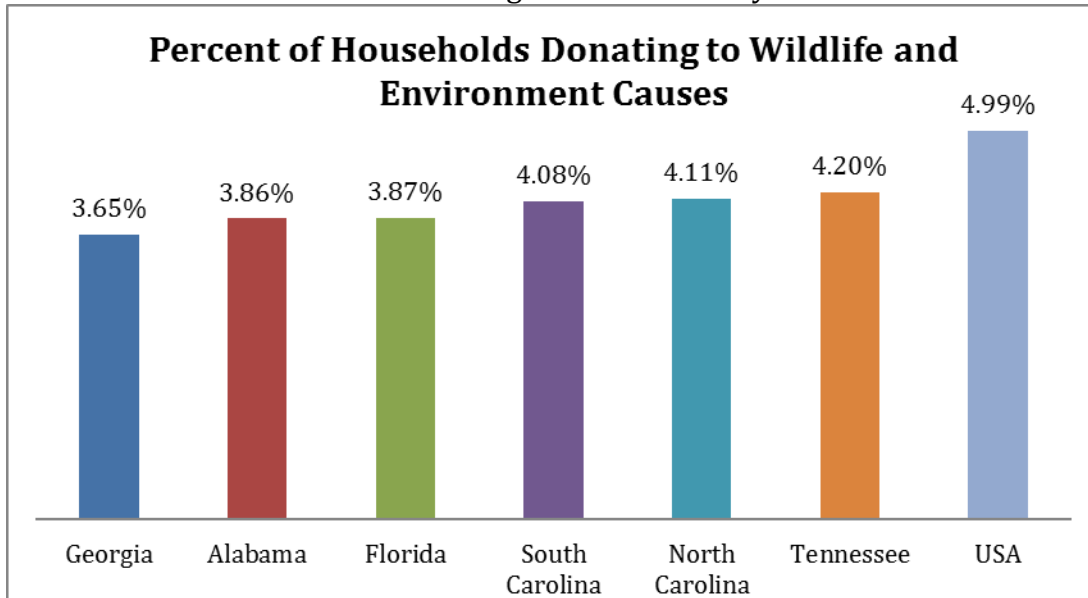
Figure 2. Source: www.infousa.com, retrieved 9/1/2016

The median number of members for organizations in the Cohort is 800. Most Cohort organizations have fewer than 1,000 members.

Cohort Membership Ranges

Range	# of Cohort Orgs
n/a	5
0-500	6
501-1,000	10
1,001 - 5,000	3
5,001 - 10,000	4
10,001 - 20,000	0
20,001 - 25,000	0
25,001 - 30,000	1

Figure 3. Source: Cohort Surveys in Assessment

Nationwide, donors give to environmental and nature protection organizations at lower rates than most other types of causes (about 3% of giving, consistently). Other

related sectors, such as health charities and animal rescue charities receive a greater share of support across all demographics.[1]

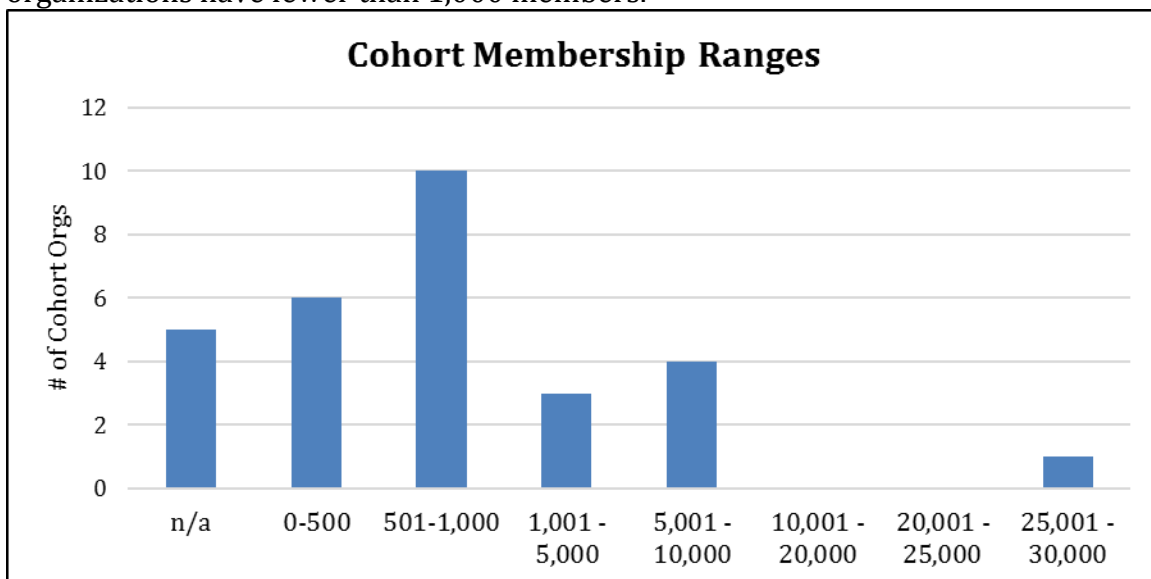Nationally, the giving patterns of different racial and ethnic groups are also impacting philanthropic support of the sector, and is further explored in the next section. There are also gender and generational[2] variations and philanthropic motivations [3] that are impacting donation rates.

The rate of internal planning and implementation of best practices may also need to increase in order to grow and sustain philanthropic support for the Sector:
- Just over half of the Cohort reported having an Annual Fundraising Plan that is current and in use (15 out of 29 organizations).
- Fifty-five percent of organizations reported having a 3-5 Year Strategic Plan that was current and in use (16 out of 29 organizations).
- Ten percent of the Cohort reported that their annual budget is not regularly used (3 out of 29 organizations).

Recommendations to Build Participation and Philanthropic Support

Through the examination of research, outside expert recommendations, Stakeholder and Cohort input, Cohort data and the findings of this project, the following actions were identified to build participation and philanthropic support for the Sector:
- Identify and employ strategies to ensure that the Sector's – and individual organization's - work is relevant to the diversity of communities served, including:
  - Building relationships and alliances with new and unconventional partners.
- Invest in professionally developed marketing and communications plans, strategies, and branding that is aimed at reaching targeted audiences, including:
  - Communicating the relevance of the Sector's work and the need for support to targeted audiences to bridge the gap between philanthropic support of environmental causes and other types of causes.
  - Targeting communications to engage more ethnically and racially diverse charitable support and participation.
  - Targeting communications based on differences in charitable giving between men and women.
  - Targeting communications based on differences in charitable giving between generations.

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[1]Rovner, Mark. 2015. "Diversity in Giving" Sea Change Strategies for Blackbaud. Presented at Roundtable by Marc Smiley, 8/31/2016

[2] Rovner, Mark. 2013. "The Next Generation of American Giving" Blackbaud. Presented at Roundtable by Marc Smiley, 8/31/2016

[3] Prince, Russ Alan and Karen Maru File. 1994. *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy: A New Approach to Cultivating Major Donors.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Presented at Roundtable by Marc Smiley, 8/31/2016

- Targeting communications based on the different motivations that drive philanthropy.
- Focusing on building place-based pride in Georgia's natural resources.
- Focusing on building transient populations' sense of place and ownership in their communities.
- Where needed, invest in organizational planning and developing and implementing annual fundraising plans, budgets, and strategic plans.
- Build donor relationships, communication, and expression of gratitude.
- Develop an environmental funders affinity group to support and grow philanthropic support of the Sector.
- Build coalitions to overcome real or perceived competition between organizations inside the Sector and in related fields (i.e., social justice, human health, etc.).
- To support donors in their charitable decision making, differentiate between the organizations in the Sector.

Priority Area 2: Increasing Engagement and Diversity

The second major need, and opportunity, identified through this project was increasing diversity among supporters, professional staff, and board members. The identified needs included being more inclusive of diverse audiences, geographic regions of the state, and political affiliations. There was also an expressed interest in being more inclusive of different sectors, particularly building partnerships with the health community and social justice groups.

Key Insights from the Data – Diversity in Charitable Support

Investing in the inclusion of diverse audiences is critical to ensuring relevance and support into the future. However, while national demographic shifts in the population show more racial diversity, philanthropic giving resembles the demographics from 25 years ago.

Giving and Population - Past, Present, and Future

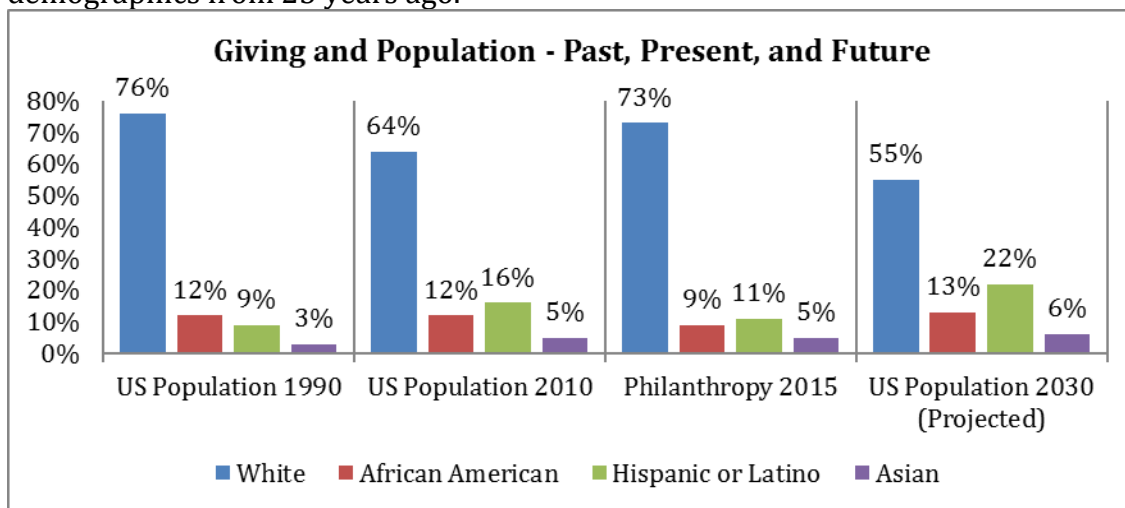|	White	African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian
US Population 1990	76%	12%	9%	3%
US Population 2010	64%	12%	16%	5%
Philanthropy 2015	73%	9%	11%	5%
US Population 2030 (Projected)	55%	13%	22%	6%

Figure 4. Source: Rovner, Mark. 2015. "Diversity in Giving" Sea Change Strategies for Blackbaud. Presented by Marc Smiley, August 31, 2016

Rovner's analysis of the national data indicates that income and religious engagement are more significant predictors of giving behavior than race or ethnicity. He found an under-representation of African-Americans and Hispanics amongst donors which is likely a result of the nonprofit Sector's failure to adequately engage non-white communities. For example, he found that African-American and Hispanic donors reported less frequent solicitation than white donors. Additionally, African-American and Hispanic donors suggested that they would give more if they were asked more often.
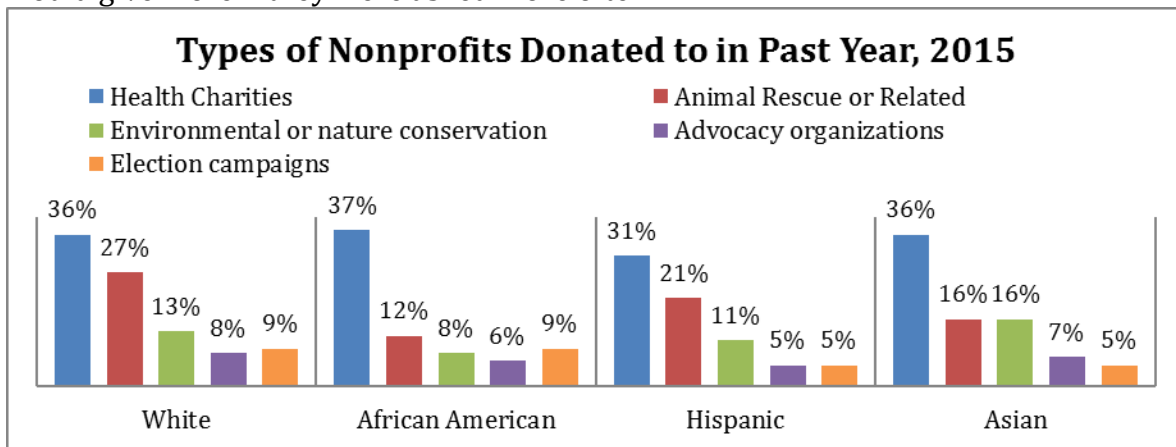

Types of Nonprofits Donated to in Past Year, 2015

- Health Charities
- Environmental or nature conservation
- Election campaigns
- Animal Rescue or Related
- Advocacy organizations

White: 36%, 27%, 13%, 8%, 9%
African American: 37%, 12%, 8%, 6%, 9%
Hispanic: 31%, 21%, 11%, 5%, 5%
Asian: 36%, 16%, 16%, 7%, 5%

Figure 5. Source: Rovner, Mark. 2015. "Diversity in Giving" Sea Change Strategies for Blackbaud. Presented at Roundtable by Marc Smiley, 8/31/2016

These giving gaps and shifts in demographics indicate a significant opportunity and need to grow diversity, equity, inclusivity, participation and giving.

Key Insights from the Data – Diversity in Staffing

Nationally, nonprofits indicate that top challenges to staff diversity are retaining younger staff and balancing ethnic and cultural diversity.
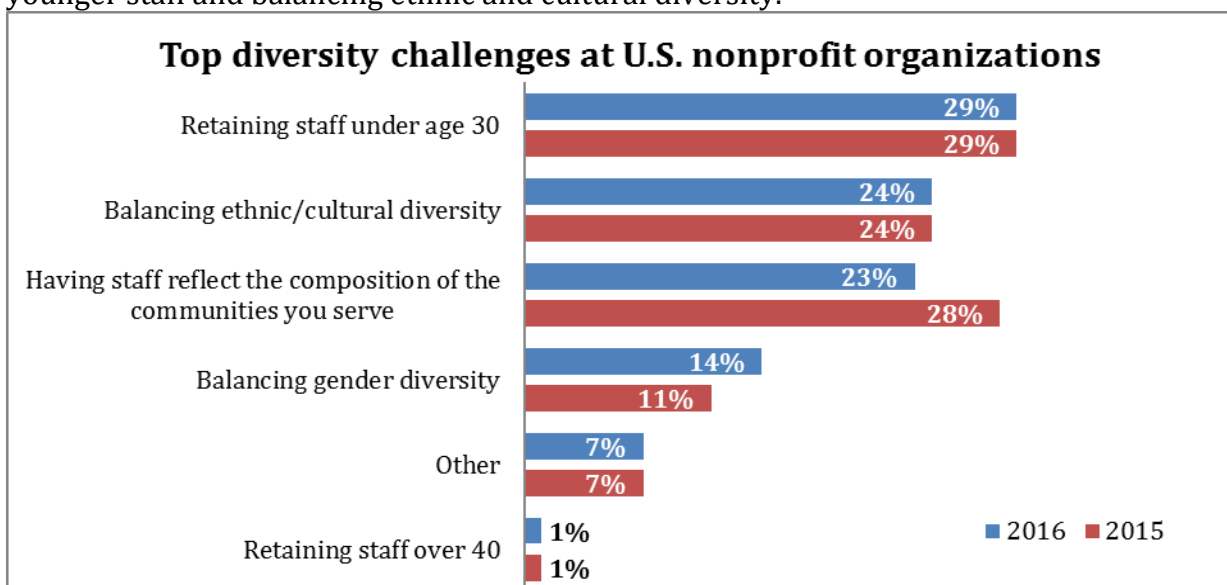

Top diversity challenges at U.S. nonprofit organizations

Challenge	2016	2015
Retaining staff under age 30	29%	29%
Balancing ethnic/cultural diversity	24%	24%
Having staff reflect the composition of the communities you serve	23%	28%
Balancing gender diversity	14%	11%
Other	7%	7%
Retaining staff over 40	1%	1%

Figure 6. Nonprofit HR. 2016. Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey

However, in a 2016 national employment practices survey, only 41% of nonprofits reported having a formal staff diversity and inclusion recruitment strategy.

Figure 7. Source: Nonprofit HR. 2016. Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey

These statistics indicate a significant opportunity and need to grow the diversity, equity, and inclusivity of the sector's professional core.

Key Insights from the Data – Diversity of Boards of Directors

In interviews and at the Georgia Environmental Nonprofit Roundtable, executives, board members and stakeholders also noted the need to make the Sector's boards of directors more diverse and more representative of the communities they serve.

Recommendations to Increase Engagement and Diversity

Through the examination of research, outside expert recommendations, Stakeholder and Cohort input, Cohort data and the findings of this project, the following actions were identified to increase engagement and diversity:

- Prioritize and invest in engagement initiatives targeted towards building diverse, equitable and inclusive organizations, including:
    - o Identifying and prioritizing audience needs.
    - o Offering programs and services that are relevant to the audience and identified needs.
    - o Targeting communications and marketing of programs, services and opportunities for support – and their relevance – to the audience.
    - o Work with the media to increase reach to under-served or under-represented demographics.
- Prioritize and operationalize diversity, equity and inclusion in strategic plans, fundraising plans, bylaws, board recruitment plans, and human resources and staff recruitment strategies.
- Prioritize and invest in training for board and staff in cultural competency, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and human resource and recruitment strategies for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Prioritize and invest in building collaborative, reciprocal relationships to build durable partnerships with diverse audiences and linked sectors.

Priority Area 3: Sustaining and Building the Sector's Professional Core

The third major need, and opportunity, identified through this project was sustaining and supporting the Sector's professional core. The data points to relatively high turnover, potentially leading to lack of continuity, set-backs, and leadership challenges. Turnover may be reduced through developing and implementing staff and executive recruitment and retention strategies. Additionally, investments in leadership development and shared leadership strategies can increase continuity and reduce set-backs when turnover occurs.

Key Insights from the Data

Staff tenures within the Cohort are relatively short. Most executives have held their current position for less than 3 years and most staff, including executives, have been in their position less than 5 years.
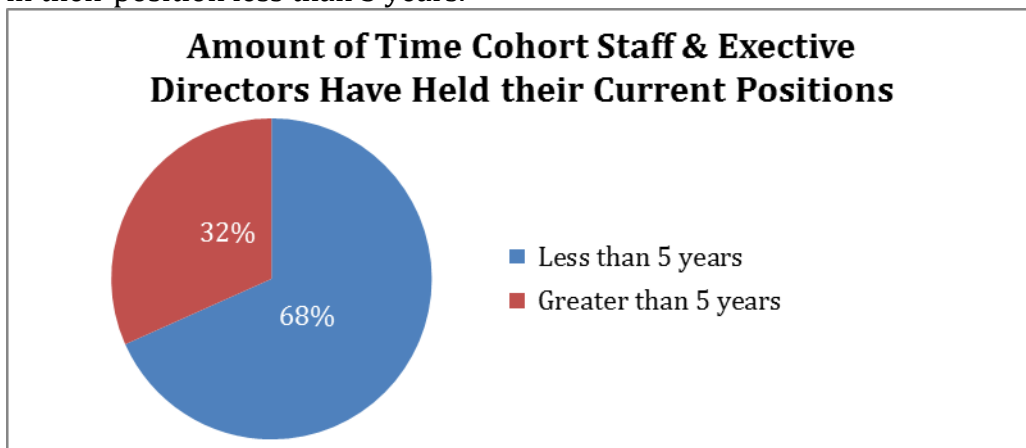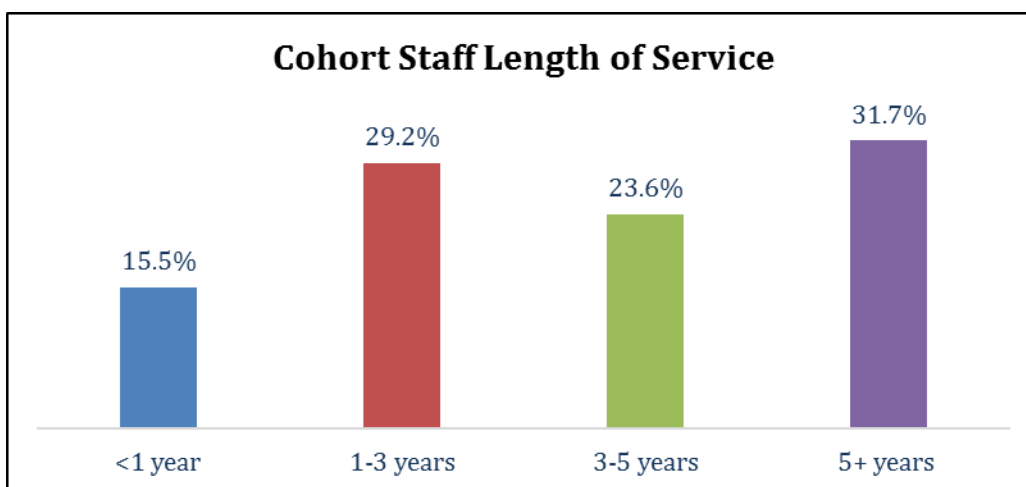

Figure 8. Source: Cohort surveys

Figure 9. Source: Cohort surveys

15

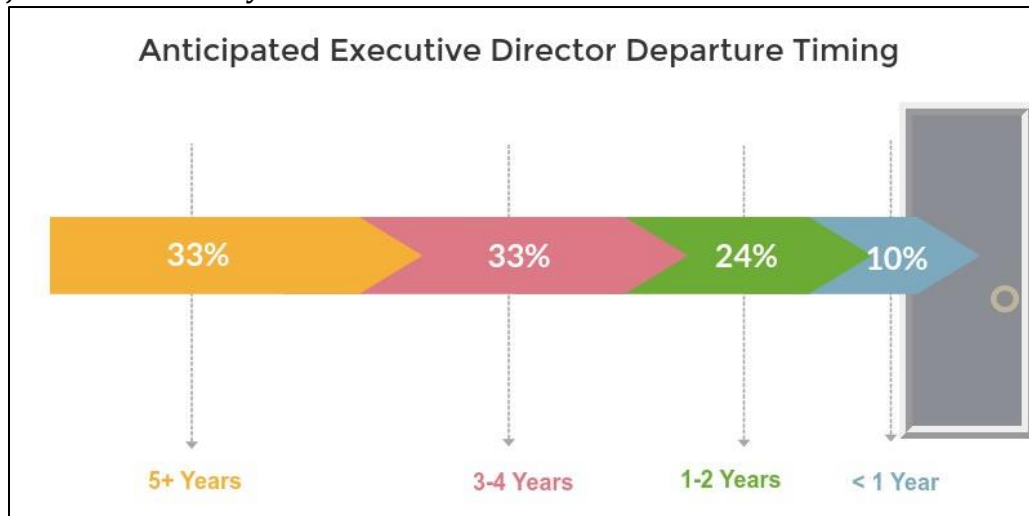A 2011 report also found that 70% of nonprofit executives planned to leave their jobs in the next 5 years.

Figure 10. Source: Cornelius, Marla, Rick Moyers, and Jeanne Bell. 2011. Daring to Lead. CompasssPoint and Meyer Foundation.

Hiring is currently on the rise in the nonprofit sector, even more so than in the for-profit sector, with 57% of nonprofits saying they were looking to hire in 2016, indicating a need for both retention and recruitment strategies to counteract increased competition in the job market.
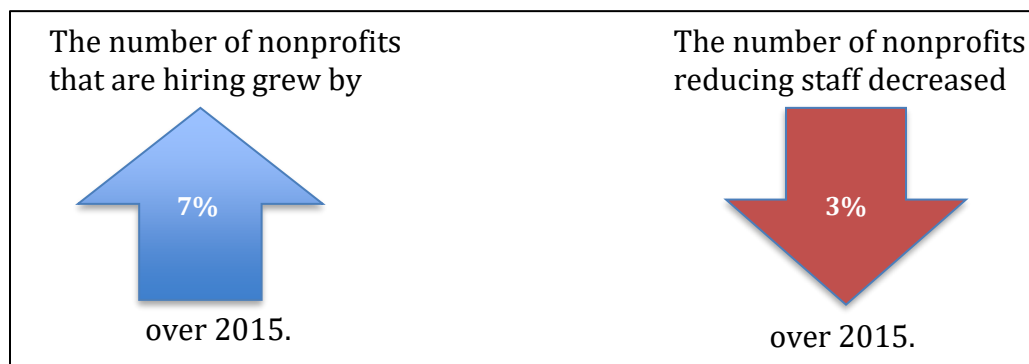

Figure 11. Source: Nonprofit HR. 2016. Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey

2016 Anticipated New Hires

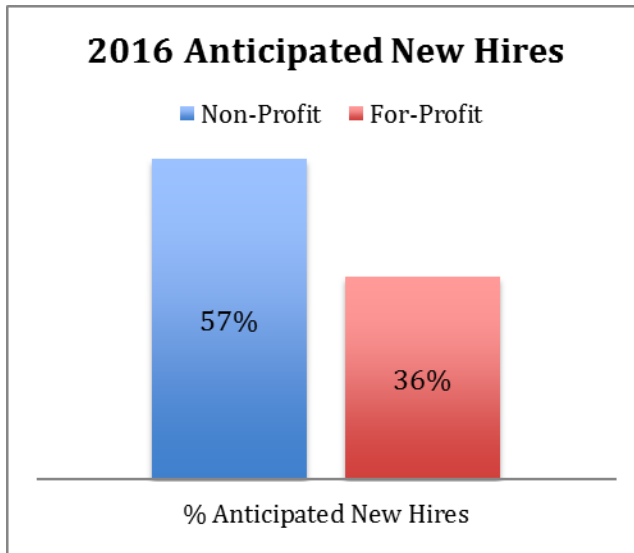■ Non-Profit ■ For-Profit

57%

36%

% Anticipated New Hires

Figure 12. Source: Nonprofit HR, Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey

Increased hiring and high rates of turnover mean the Sector will need to increase the number of senior leaders in the coming years. However, nationally, nonprofits report that their biggest retention and recruitment challenge is retaining staff under the age of 30. According to the Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out report, 30% of young professionals say they are interested in a career leading a nonprofit and the following are key barriers to pursuing nonprofit leadership positions:

- 69% of nonprofit employees feel underpaid.
- 64% have financial concerns about a career in a nonprofit organization and whether it will provide the financial support needed long-term (see below).
- Only 4% get support and development needed to advance their career.
- Inherent structural barriers to career advancement.
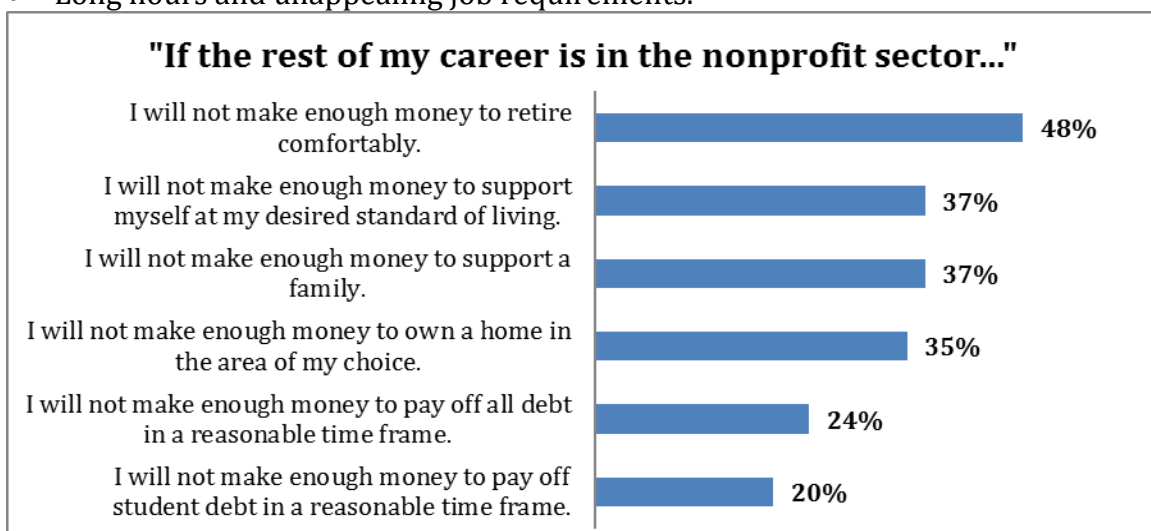- Long hours and unappealing job requirements.

"If the rest of my career is in the nonprofit sector..."

I will not make enough money to retire comfortably.	48%
I will not make enough money to support myself at my desired standard of living.	37%
I will not make enough money to support a family.	37%
I will not make enough money to own a home in the area of my choice.	35%
I will not make enough money to pay off all debt in a reasonable time frame.	24%
I will not make enough money to pay off student debt in a reasonable time frame.	20%

Figure 13. Source: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Meyer Foundation and Idealist.org. Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out

Concurrently, most nonprofits do not have a recruitment strategy.

Nonprofits without a formal staff recruitment strategy

Category	%
Large (>$15m)	41%
Medium ($5m-$15m)	49%
Small (< $5m)	73%

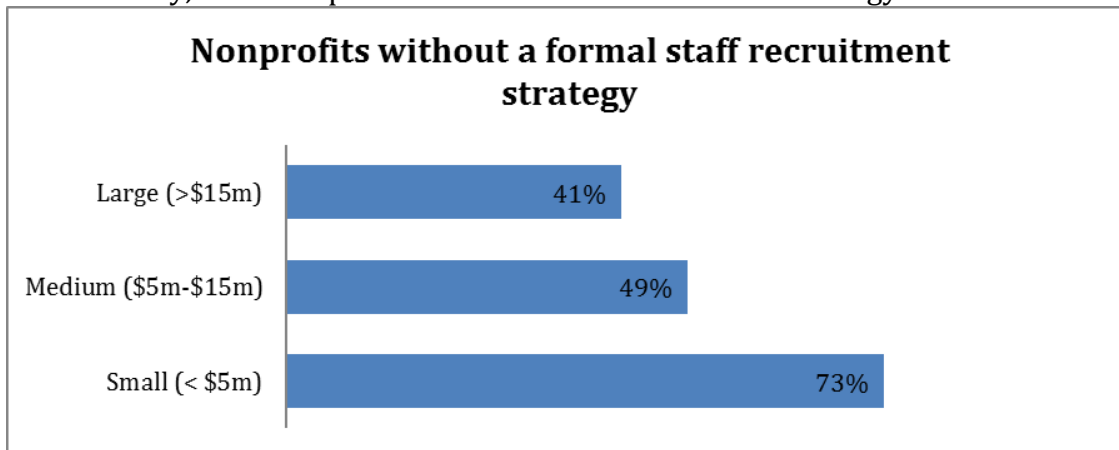Figure 14. Source: Nonprofit HR, Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey

Budget constraints are also a limiting factor in recruitment and retention. For the last 5 years, 1 in 3 nonprofits nationally report that "budget constraints" are their biggest staffing challenge.

Also, the Sector's current levels of investment in staff and leadership development practices may also be impacting staff recruitment and retention as well the outcomes of leadership transitions:

- Succession plans have been developed and are being implemented in only 7% of Cohort organizations (2 out of 29)
- Staff training plans are current and in use in 28% of Cohort organizations (8 out of 29)
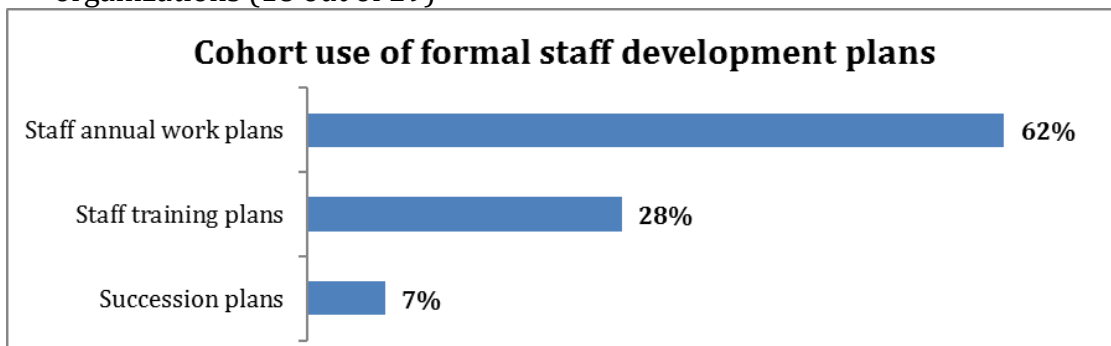- Annual Work Plans for staff are current and in use in 62% of Cohort organizations (18 out of 29)

Cohort use of formal staff development plans

Category	%
Staff annual work plans	62%
Staff training plans	28%
Succession plans	7%

Figure 15. Source: Cohort surveys

Recommendations to Sustain and Build the Sector's Professional Core

Through the examination of research, outside expert recommendations, Stakeholder and Cohort input, Cohort data and the findings of this project, the following actions were identified to sustain and build the Sector's professional core:

- Invest in recruitment and retention strategies, including:

- o Identifying and implementing strategies to address recruitment barriers and burnout of current staff related to long hours, insufficient salaries and benefits, lack of support networks or other "nonprofit culture" issues.
  - o Identifying and implementing strategies to overcome budget constraints that are impacting recruitment and retention.
- Invest in strategies to build resiliency related to turnover, including:
  - o Identifying and implementing strategies for shared leadership and leadership development to build resilience and sustain a pipeline of new leaders to step in when current leaders retire or move on.
  - o Increasing investments in leadership training, mentoring programs, and sharing best practices for leadership development.
  - o Investing in succession planning and implementation.
- Create more opportunities for the Sector's staff and executives to build and maintain support networks.
- Work with existing organizations (Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership, Georgia Center for Nonprofits, etc.) to more fully meet the leadership development, training, convening and networking needs of the Sector.

Priority Area 4: Sustaining and Building Board Leadership

The fourth major need, and opportunity, identified through this project was the need to develop improved board governance and robust organizational support from – and for - boards of directors. While Cohort organizations maintain a good balance of new-to-experienced tenure on their boards, board development garnered the least amount of executives' time. Cohort organizations reported infrequent evaluations of their board's performance, and executives expressed the least amount of confidence in providing training and mentoring for board members. Further, the need to build stronger relationships with board members, establish clear expectations for board members, better integrate board roles into organizations, and develop and maintain systems of accountability for boards were identified as key needs.

Key Insights from the Data

The majority of Cohort board members – including board chairs and executive committee members – have been on the board for 4-6 years. This data indicates that overall Cohort organizations are maintaining a good balance of new-to-experienced members on their boards.
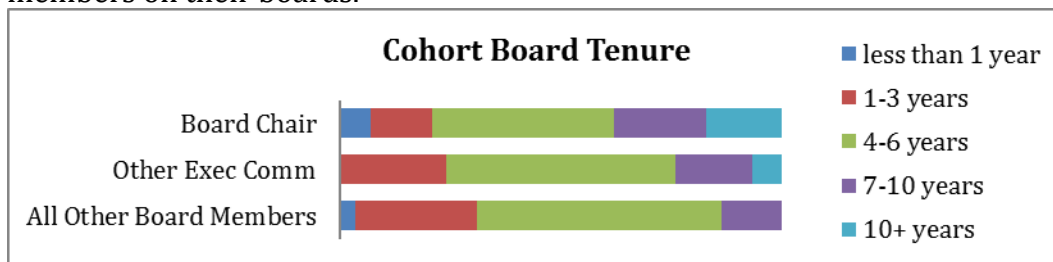

Figure 16. Source: Cohort Surveys

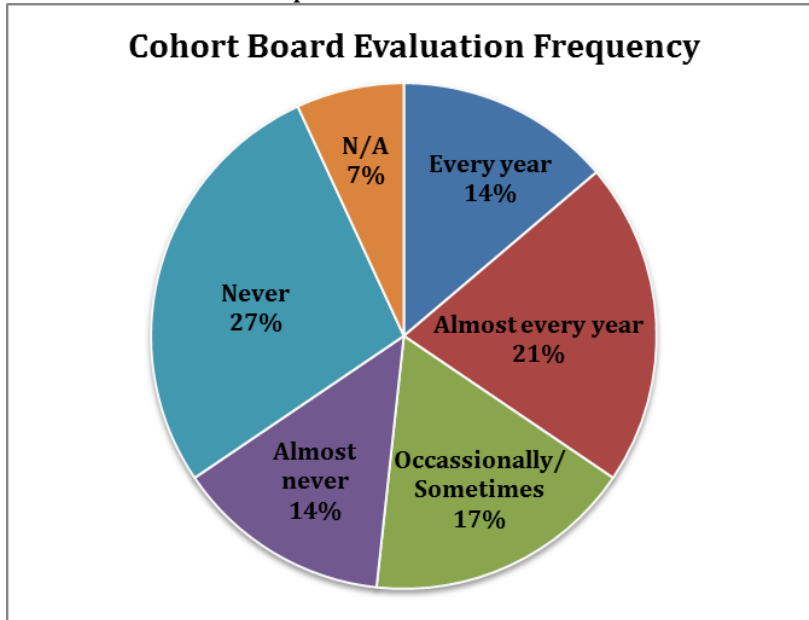However, the majority of Cohort organizations are not conducting annual evaluations of board performance.

Cohort Board Evaluation Frequency

Figure 17. Source: Cohort surveys

Additionally, board development garnered the least amount of the Cohort's executives time.

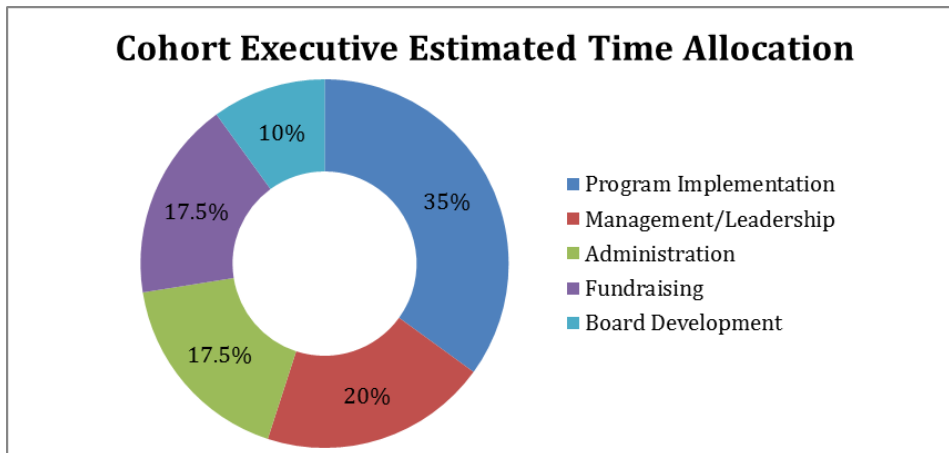**Cohort Executive Estimated Time Allocation**

Figure 18. Source: Cohort surveys

Cohort executives also reported the least confidence in recruiting and mentoring board members with:
- 16 reporting they would benefit from skill-building in this area.
- 2 reporting they were not confident with this skill.
- 2 reporting they need to learn this skill.

Only 34% of Cohort organizations include board training in their budgets (10 out of 29).

Recommendations to Sustain and Build Board Leadership

Through the examination of research, outside expert recommendations, Stakeholder and Cohort input, Cohort data and the findings of this project, the following actions were identified to sustain and build board leadership:

- Identify and implement strategies to integrate boards more fully as an integral part of the organizational team with defined roles and responsibilities.
- Establish board expectations and systems of accountability.
- Invest necessary time for effective board development and building board relationships.
- Invest in board appreciation and team development.
- Invest in board training, recruitment, development and committee structures.
- Provide inter-organizational networking and training for boards.

Additional Recommendations for Consideration

Identify a convener to continue sector-wide collaboration and networking

At the Roundtable, Cohort executives and board members expressed a strong interest in continuing to meet and collaborate. There is an interest in identifying willing conveners to continue collaboration and networking, and to expand the group beyond the initial 36 Cohort organizations.

Identify an entity to regularly maintain and update the database of Sector information

There is an ongoing need to maintain and periodically update the data in the Sector-wide database of organizations and organizational information. There is also an opportunity to share the database to provide the information to a larger audience.

Investigate the need for additional efforts to impact policy issues and/or elections

There is also interest in further examining the question around capacity, coordination, and building influence around policy and elections and investigating if there are gaps, and if so, who should fill those gaps and how.

Conclusion

This 4-phase project revealed major achievements within Georgia's environmental nonprofit sector. Four key areas are also ripe for strategic investments by the Sector to ensure its continued growth and strength to meet tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

Building participation and philanthropic support will allow the Sector to grow its influence and financial capacity.

Increasing engagement and diversity will enable the Sector to ensure its relevance, impact and community-wide support into the future.

Investing in recruitment and retention strategies, as well as strategies to develop leadership in organizations, will sustain and build the Sector's professional core and its resilience against set-backs and leadership challenges when turnover occurs.

Finally, sustaining and building board leadership will lead to improved board governance and more robust organizational support from boards of directors.

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