

Engage, Empower, Implement | CBO Focus Groups #1- #6 Summaries

Focus Group 1: Existing SACOG Partners

- Applying for Grants
 - CBOs think the contracting process is too complicated, time-consuming, and tedious. Most CBOs do not have the staff time or in-house capacity to apply for and manage SACOG member grant funding. In general, current SACOG partners want easier grant applications and funding processes.
 - CBOs want to be informed when grants are made available. SACOG should take a multimediate communications approach, including email, community meetings, and word of mouth.
- Receiving Funds
 - CBOs want SACOG to improve on clearly defining and communicating funding reporting requirements, invoicing, and reimbursement processes. This includes invoicing deadlines, even if they are flexible, invoicing sample documents, budget, reimbursements start dates, and a firm reimbursement workflow.
 - CBOs want funding upfront to account for potential cash flow issues and the delay of reimbursements/invoicing.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs want to be more involved with SACOG's staff and mission. Now that in-person events are happening, there is a willingness to develop relationships over time and meet in person through networking, meet and greets, and other event and outreach opportunities.
 - CBOs would be more likely to build a relationship with SACOG if they promoted its members and previous funding award winners.

Focus Group 2: Opportunities for New Partners

- Applying for Grants
 - CBOs want direct support in applying for grant funding. High-level technical assistance is needed to understand current grant applications and maneuver the federal, state, and local government application processes.
 - Smaller CBOs often do not have matching funds and cannot apply for grants if matching funds are required. This also applies to insurance requirements. Both matching funds and expensive insurance requirements limit small and new CBOs' involvement.
- Receiving Funds
 - Prospective partners are interested in funding accessibility through an intuitive, easy-to-manage grant platform. CBOs feel easy to use grant and invoicing platforms paired with direct technical assistance can make receiving and managing funding easier. This would also make new partners more likely to apply.



- CBOs would be interested in receiving professional accounting services or services to help them navigate technological barriers to the funding process.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs believe information sharing and social events are the best way to create new partnerships with their community.
 - SACOG should focus on bringing people together and creating a platform for communication for relationship-building and advocacy.

Focus Group 3: Geography

- Applying for Grants
 - CBOs are concerned about being “heard” by SACOG regarding grants and other funding opportunities. Due to the remoteness and distance of many CBOs, the current funding priorities are not in line with the needs, which results in many gaps in services/funding and systematic barriers in the application process resulting from language and other cultural barriers.
 - Many CBOs have never heard of SACOG or their funding priorities. CBOs recommend using elected officials and local community groups to bridge the accessibility gap.
- Receiving Funds
 - Aside from general access to funding, many rural CBOs need help meeting the administrative and staffing requirements that come with receiving funding from federal, state, or local governments.
 - CBOs want more direct guidance and support in managing finances through training and grant workshops.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs in rural communities want an opportunity to give feedback and be included in the conversation. Invitations to public meetings, community workshops, and training access are a good start to forging better relationships with isolated communities and disillusioned community members.
 - CBOs think SACOG should communicate directly with community leaders and CBOs across the region. Working with trusted partners will create relationships.

Focus Group 4: Transportation and Environmental Justice

- Applying for Grants
 - CBOs need more funding options to meet Transportation and Environmental needs.
 - Language barriers and the lack of multi-lingual documents and applications restrict funding to needed projects.
- Receiving Funds



- CBOs want more funding for their project. They feel the opportunity to increase awareness of their needs is critical to providing additional and better-quality services.
- There is a need for unrestricted flexible funding opportunities, specifically to build organizational capacity and grow program scope. Funding should be made available for administrative and staff costs.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs believe connecting with trusted community partners like faith communities, housing representatives, and community health workers can be a good way to disseminate information and create partnerships with Transportation and Environmental Justice CBOs.
 - Lean on strong CBOs such as the El Dorado Community Foundation, Impact Foundry, Sacramento Metro Chamber, and Sierra Health Foundation to connect with other CBOs.

Focus Group 5: Racial and Social Justice

- Applying for Grants
 - CBOs express issues with the length and complexity of grant applications through federal, state, and local funding sources. Extensive forms and documents prevent CBOs from applying for and preventing funding to small organizations.
 - SACOG should ensure funding priorities of grant applications align with community and CBO needs and priorities.
- Receiving Funds
 - Grant managers with SACOG are “fantastic.” There is, however, difficulty in using funds when the priorities of the funding agreement are not in-line with the scope of service of the CBO.
 - CBOs want to make sure funding timetables are consistent and set up front. If CBOs need to wait 60 days to be reimbursed, they want to know that before they request the funding.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs put trust in community organizations such as faith-based communities, local justice organizations, and individual advocates that have a long history of serving their community. SACOG could benefit from engaging with these key stakeholders and creating long-term relationships.
 - CBOs find the best way to create relationships with the people we survey is to meet them where they are at. If they have a substance abuse issue or are unhoused, CBOs are accepting and do not limit services.

Focus Group 6: Housing and Community/Economic Development

- Applying for Grants
 - The overarching sentiment of the meeting was for SACOG to focus on funding housing programs and related services. CBOs believe there needs to be more



funding for high-need programs, considering the breadth of the housing issue in the SACOG member regions.

- CBOs want a simple and fully transparent application process so they can focus on providing services. Some groups are all volunteer-run and applications take away from limited volunteer time.
- Receiving Funds
 - CBOs that work in the housing space want multi-year funding agreements and allow for a comprehensive set of programs. These CBOs also want sufficient time to create a proposal and gather community partners to develop a complex and comprehensive implementation plan.
 - CBOs believe they have a quality solution to the issues at hand, they just need flexible and an appropriate amount of funding to get to implement a series of solutions which include Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, and Emergency Shelters.
- Creating Partnerships
 - CBOs think SACOG can be critical in addressing NIMBYism in their service area. This includes communicating with community members, housing developers, and other CBOs.
 - CBOs want cross-industry accountability and transparency of funding for housing and homeless services funding.