

Fostering Community Engagement

Chairs and Conveners

AIMEE LIOTINO (Co-Chair)
Pikes Peak United Way

KIRA PASQUESI (Co-Chair)
Colorado College

JENNIFER MALENKY (Co-Convenor)
The Resource Exchange

BECCI RUDER (Co-Convenor)
Leadership Pikes Peak

Researcher

AMY RODDA
Pikes Peak Library District

Members

JOE BEGGS
League of Women Voters

LOU ANN DEKLEVA
Colorado Springs School District 11

MEGAN HANNA
Wells Fargo

BAILEY HARRIS
Citizens Project

MICHAEL JOHNSON
Mountain States Employers Council

SHIRLEY MARTINEZ
Colorado Springs Diversity Forum

SUSAN PRESTI
Colorado Springs Utilities

DEE VAZQUEZ SABOL
Pikes Peak Library District

DAVE SOMERS
Center for Nonprofit Excellence



Photograph by Yuri Arcurs

Visit our website: www.ppunitedway.org

The *Fostering Community Engagement* section highlights indicators that include voter turnout, public meeting attendance, quantity of neighborhood organizations, volunteerism rates, community giving and individual donations, citizen perceptions of community acceptance, and local leadership demographics. You will read that nearly 64% of voters turned out for the mayoral runoff in May 2011, that 93% of QLI survey respondents indicated fostering an accepting and welcoming community is somewhat to very important, and that our region has a 65% volunteer rate that's nearly double the average for the state of Colorado.

Colorado Springs received national attention in 2010 for dramatically reduced city budgets and resources. The community rallied to support vital services and the city formed many public-private partnerships. As stated by President Obama, "Economic recovery is as much about what you're doing in your communities as what we're doing in Washington – and it's going to take all of us, working together."¹

In the 2010 Volunteering in America Issue Brief, the Corporation for National & Community Service examined economic and community factors in relation to volunteer rates. Findings indicate that some community factors, such as higher rates of homeownership, higher percentages of high school or college graduates, and larger numbers of nonprofit organizations have a positive relationship with higher volunteer rates. Other factors, such as higher percentages of multi-unit housing, longer commuting times, and higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and foreclosure, correspond with lower volunteer rates in states and/or large metropolitan areas. While volunteering is just one type of contribution, it is a vital component of community engagement. Many of these factors are listed as indicators in other sections, showing impact on additional aspects of quality of life as well.

The Community Engagement Vision Council invites you to explore how we can continue to foster community engagement in the Pikes Peak region. We hope the section will not only provide indicators for our current status and progress, but allow us to imagine a future with greater community involvement.

Consider the following questions and their potential impact:

What if we all knew our neighbors' names and dialogued about community concerns and solutions? What if every teacher discussed local issues and students took action in local schools? What if our 2,097 nonprofit organizations were flooded with volunteers, donations, and board member applicants? What if every registered voter cast a vote or attended a caucus? What if every citizen of our region perceived the community to be very accepting? What if citizens had an organized forum to address community challenges like redevelopment and smart planning?

As we host national and international events such as the US Women's Open, the 2012 World University Championships in Softball and Boxing, US Pro Cycling Challenge, and the 50th Anniversary of our Sister City relationship with Fujiyoshida, Japan, we have the opportunity to showcase our engagement across the world. Our individual and collective action has the potential to multiply in unexpected and meaningful ways.

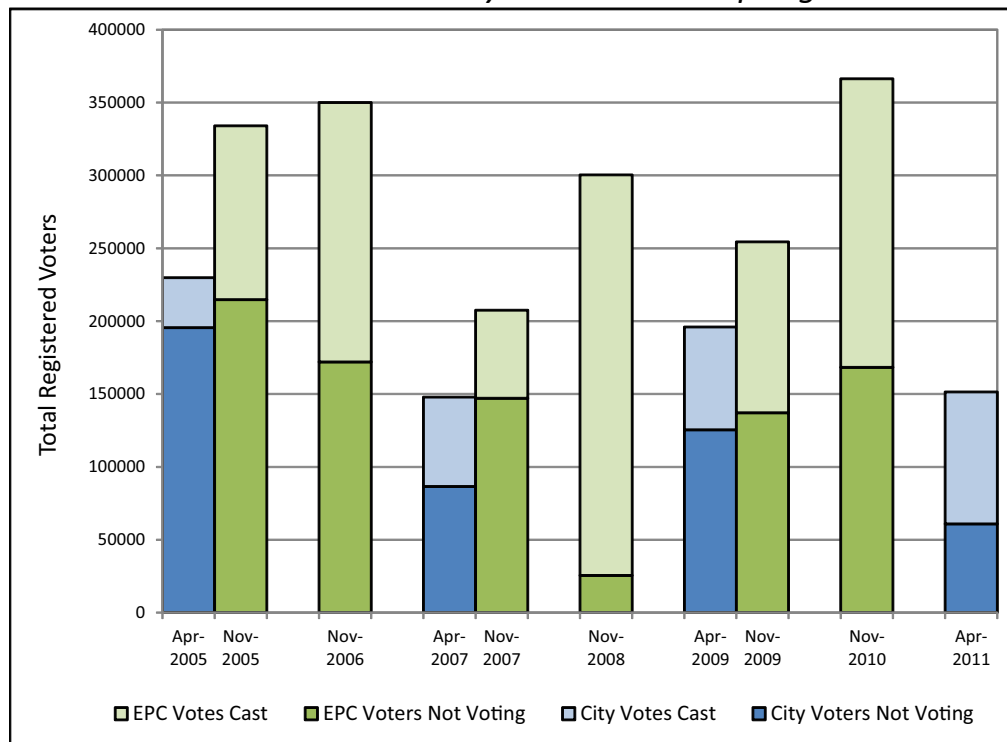


1 "President Obama Unveils 'United We Serve,' Calls on All Americans to Commit to Meaningful Volunteer Service in their Daily Lives." The White House, 17 June 2009. Web. May 2011. <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

-Civic Engagement-

Voting Patterns

Election Trends in El Paso County and Colorado Springs



Source: El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs

The first Chart shows the voting patterns of eligible voters in El Paso County and Colorado Springs municipal elections. Coordinated elections are conducted by the El Paso County Clerk & Recorder and include ballot measures and races across County municipalities. It should be noted that there was no city election in 2006, 2008 or 2010. Voting in the City of Colorado Springs continued to increase, with 60% of registered Colorado Springs voters casting ballots in April 2011, compared to 36% of registered Colorado Springs voters in 2009. Voter turnout has continued to increase since 2005.

Why is This Important?

In 2008, 78% of eligible voters in El Paso County voted in the presidential election. Across the nation, communities like ours witnessed new levels of political participation. What is evident with the new voter data

is the turnout was not just a one-time change, but is trending towards a long-term increase in voter participation. Even with the increase in voter turnout, the number of registered voters shifts year to year. Elections with national races and high profile ballot issues attract a larger block of the voting population.

How are We Doing?

The year 2011 marks a significant change in Colorado Springs with the election of our first strong mayor, Steve Bach, sworn into office June 7th. The Strong-Mayor Council form of government broadens the role of Mayor, in which the Mayor is the chief executive and the City Council is the legislative body. It is modeled after our national government.



Photograph by Karin Hildebrand Lau

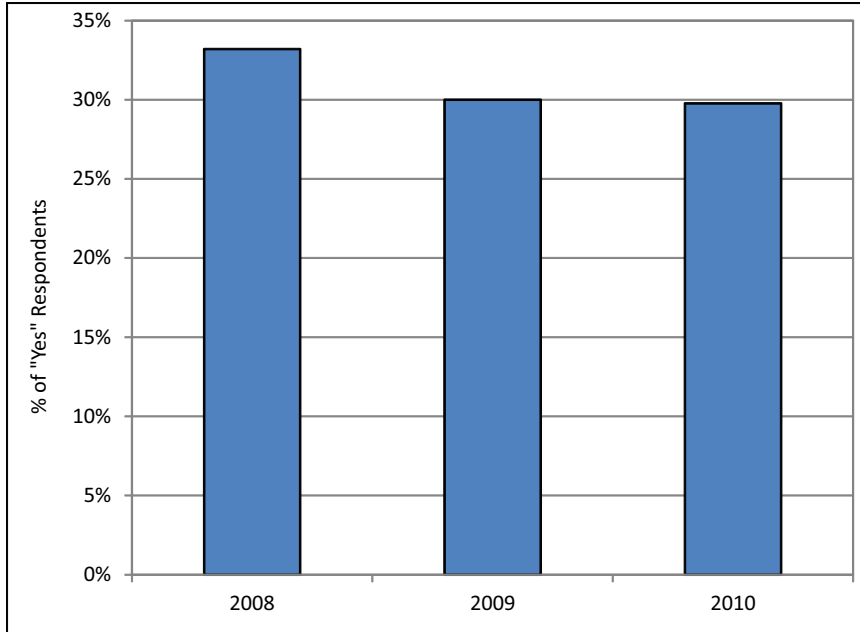
In April of 2011 60% of registered voters cast votes and 64% cast votes again in May 2011 during the historic transition to our new form of government. Dr. Robert Loevy, a political science professor at Colorado College, describes the voting role as a “privilege and opportunity” but notes our new Mayor will set a precedent about how the Strong-Mayor of Colorado Springs will operate.

Potential for Action

The Strong-Mayor position creates a visible and responsible office directly accountable to the voters of Colorado Springs. With the important shift in the mayoral role, communication to the general public and availability of the Mayor is as important as ever. Even with increased accountability in the position, the valuable role of informed and engaged citizens in civic life is still as important as ever.

Public Meeting Attendance

Have you attended a public meeting that discussed community affairs in the last year?



Source: QLI community Visioning Surveys

The first Chart shows the "Yes" responses for the past three years to the question "In the last year have you attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs?"

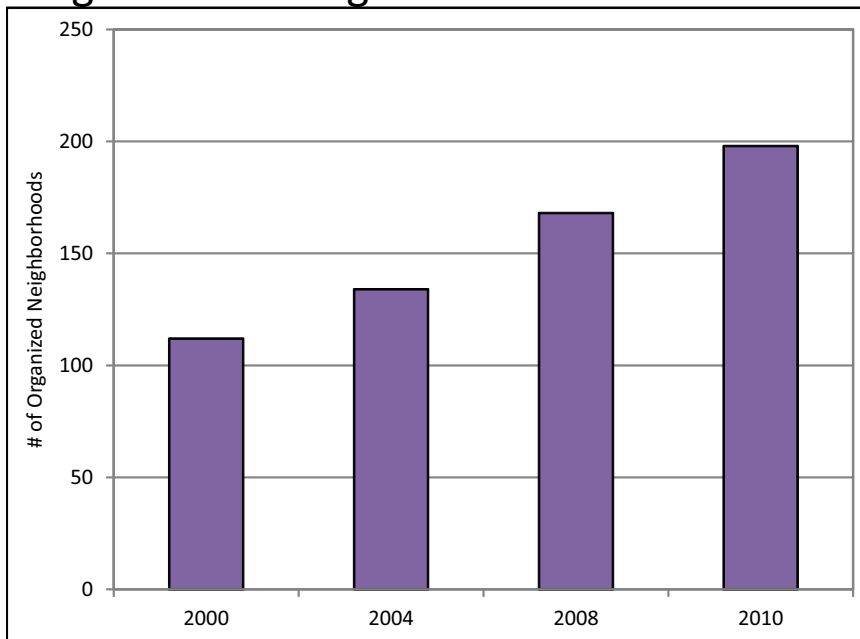
Why is This Important?

It is important that our citizens are engaged in the community and informed about issues. There has been little change during the three years surveyed.

Potential for Action

A collaborative effort by multiple community organizations will be necessary to move the bar on this indicator. A team approach to outreach would be an effective path to increased community involvement.

Neighborhood Organizations



Source: Council of Neighbors and Organizations

The second Chart shows the growth in organized neighborhood associations in the last five years. These are either legally established Homeowners Associations (as recognized by Colorado State Law – i.e.: HOA's), which may have been created by the original neighborhood developer, or an independently established HOA. Both types normally have elected neighborhood officers and regular meetings/activities.

Why is This Important?

Neighborhood organizations are an important vehicle for mutual support in recreational, interactional, and political goals.

How are We Doing?

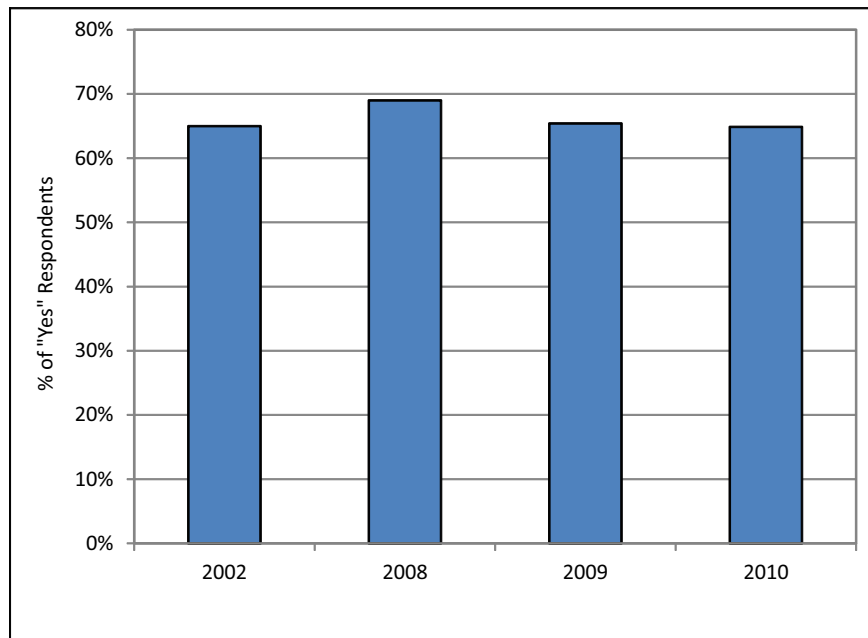
Previous growth may be attributed to better tracking and visibility on the part of Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO) and the growth of new communities. CONO plays an active role in many local issues, including public safety and open space advocacy, various legislation and ordinances, candidate forums, comprehensive planning and a mobility study, the development review process, and public schools.

Potential for Action

Neighborhood Associations can play an important role in relating local government decision-making to a community level. Growing and strengthening opportunities for neighbors to connect is an important strategy to support and engage community. We can also look to new opportunities for informing the community with limited time by utilizing emerging technology.

-Volunteerism-

In the last year, did you or other household members spend any time on charitable volunteer service activities?



Source: QLI Community Visioning Surveys

The first Chart shows there is a slight decline (.52%) in the number of households that reported being engaged in volunteer or charitable activity from 2010 and a little over 4% decline from the all-time high of 69% in 2008.

Why is This Important?

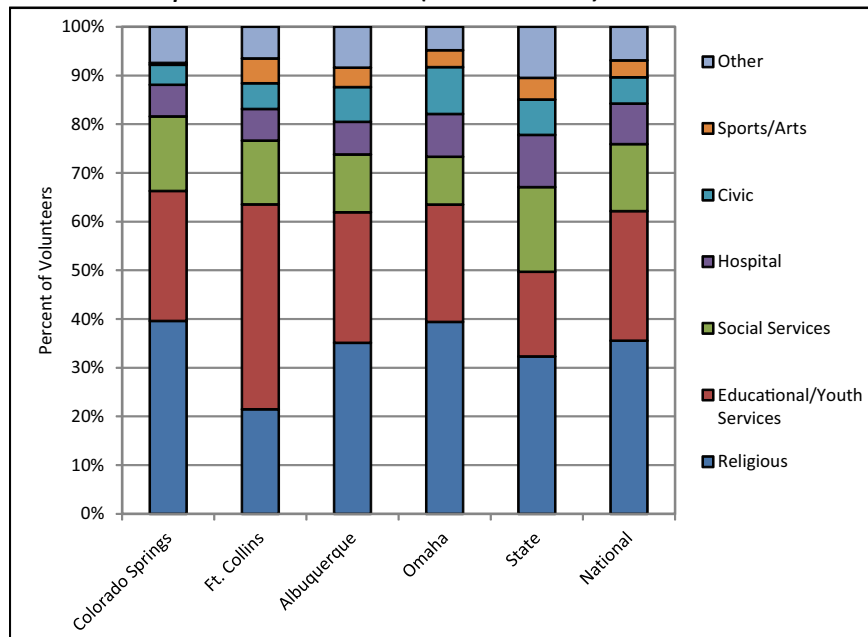
While the Pikes Peak Region experienced a decline for two years, a rate of 64.88% is still nearly double the 33% average for the state of Colorado, and significantly higher than the national average of 26.8%.

Volunteer administrators are reporting an increase in highly qualified volunteer recruits inquiring about volunteer opportunities. The downturn in the economy may bring a number of community members forward who have not previously volunteered. This positive aspect could strengthen the volunteer base in Colorado Springs.

Potential for Action

We can encourage community members seeking volunteer opportunities to use the website, www.volunteerpikespeak.org and look for opportunities as an individual, family, small group or work entity to increase participation in community-wide service events such as Make a Difference Month, Days of Service and GenerationNEXT. Another suggestion is to encourage DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in Agencies) to sponsor a forum for nonprofit organizations and local faith-based organizations to discuss about how they can work together to provide opportunities that better engage their community members.

Where People Volunteered (2006-2009)



Source: Volunteering in America

The second Chart shows the sectors in which people have volunteered over the last four years. Volunteering with a religious organization was highest for most communities, followed by volunteers working within educational services.

Why is This Important?

This is one way to show the immense value volunteers bring to a community. By looking at the areas in which people volunteer, Volunteer Pikes Peak and other charitable services can better see where community service can make a dynamic impact in the Pikes Peak Region.

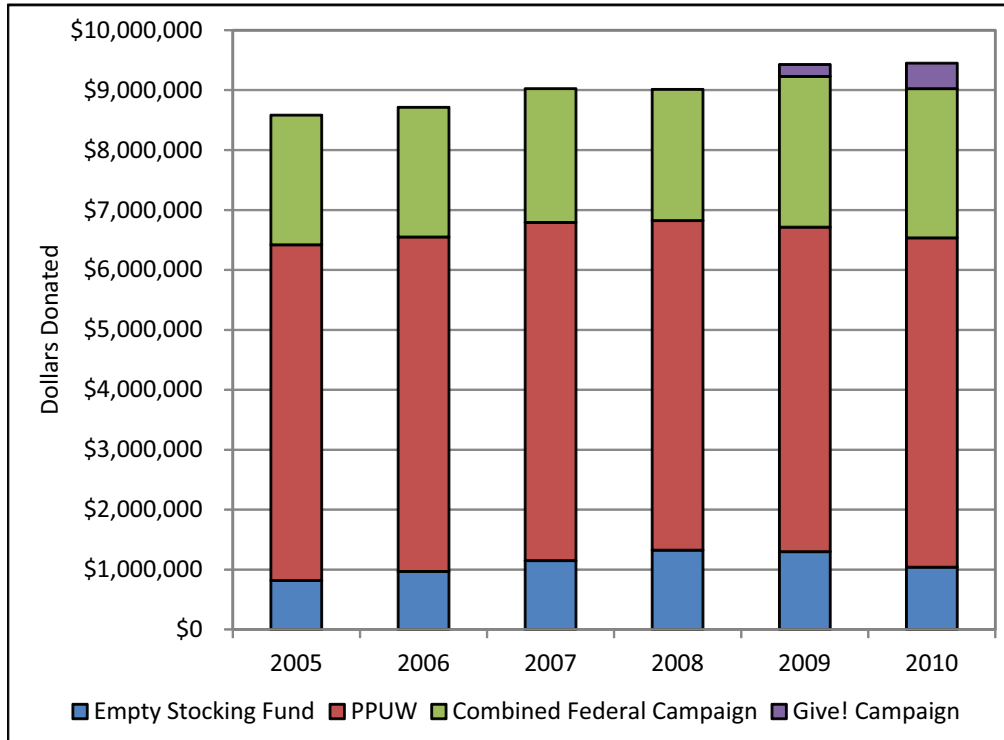
How are We Doing?

Compared to the nation, Colorado Springs residents are 4% more likely to volunteer with a religious organization and 1% more likely to volunteer with educational institutions than with other organizational sectors. While we are trending with the national sector, Colorado Springs volunteerism rate is still decreasing.

With only 32% of Colorado Springs residents volunteering in 2009, we ranked 27th out of 75 mid-sized cities, a drop from 26th in 2008. With the slight decline, our community's needs and opportunities for improvement continues to grow.

-Philanthropy-

Community Giving Combined Community Contributions



Source: Combined Federal Campaign, Empty Stocking Fund, Pikes Peak United Way, Indy Give

The Chart shows the trend in dollars raised by the Pikes Peak United Way’s annual campaign, The Gazette’s Empty Stocking Fund, the Combined Federal Campaign and, in the most recent years, the Independent’s GIVE! Campaign. While this does not track all charitable giving in El Paso County, it is the data most universally reported by communities to indicate their giving trends. Donations through the three traditional campaigns decreased in 2010, but with the addition of the GIVE! Campaign, total giving remained flat. Combined giving for these sources totaled \$9,450,529 in 2010.

Why is This Important?

Our local governments’ reduced budgets and resources made national headlines in 2010. As a result, the community turned to the nonprofit and private sectors to fill in the gaps and keep valued community services

such as parks maintenance and community centers functioning. The increased burden of providing these services requires an increase in donor giving to be sustainable.

How Are We Doing?

The Pikes Peak Region has maintained its giving levels better than the national average. Total charitable giving nationally fell 3.6% in 2009. However, comparable cities such as Fort Collins, Colorado and Albuquerque, New Mexico saw significant increases in their 2010 United Way campaign donations of 12.23% and 4.12% respectively.

As part of the Community Visioning Survey, participants were asked: Have you donated money or property to charity in the last 12 months? The findings indicate that self-reported individual giving is down 6% from the last year. Even with the decrease in individual giving, El Paso County residents reported that 83% of individuals gave to charities in 2010 which is greater than the U.S. average of 70% in 2009. In 2006, Colorado ranked fifth among all 50 states in average adjusted gross income but ranked 38th in charitable contributions as a percent of that income (Coloradans earned 7% more than the average American, but gave 9% less to charity).

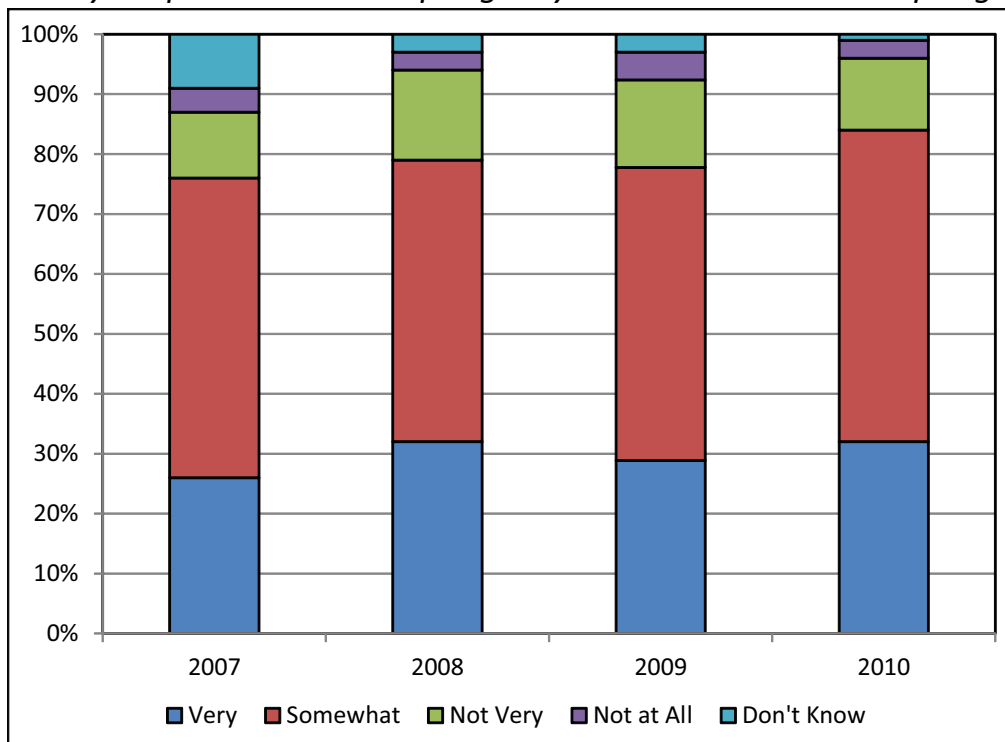
Potential for Action

A 2010 study conducted by Cygnus Applied Research, a Chicago fund-raising consulting firm, found that donors at every age prefer online giving. Eighty-six percent of those under 35 years of age prefer giving online and 75% of those ages 35 to 64. More than 50% of those over 65 said they would give via the Internet. The same study found that the majority of Americans will make their 2011 donations online rather than through the mail, in response to telemarketing calls, or other techniques. This compelling study has broad implications for how nonprofits and philanthropic programs connect with potential donors.

-Community Diversity-

★ Acceptance

Survey Response: How accepting do you consider Colorado Springs to be?



Source: Leadership Summit 2008 Community Visioning Survey, 2009-2011 QLI Community Visioning Surveys

This Chart: In 2010, 84% of residents surveyed perceived the region to be somewhat to very accepting; 52% indicated that Colorado Springs is “Somewhat Accepting,” while 32% say it is a “Very Accepting” community. Both numbers are up from last year.

Why is This Important?

Diversity is one component that makes a community unique. For diversity to thrive, people of varying race, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender expression, physical ability, educational background, geographic location, political affiliation and income level must be welcomed and accepted, not simply tolerated.

How are We Doing?

Colorado Springs residents value diversity and acceptance. According to the 2011 Community Survey, 93% of respondents indicated

that fostering an accepting and welcoming community is somewhat to very important. This number is up 6% from last year. Local organizations like the Diversity Forum, with their annual celebration, *Everybody Welcome*, continue to create opportunities for residents to broaden their awareness of the depth and breadth of multi-cultural opportunities in the community.

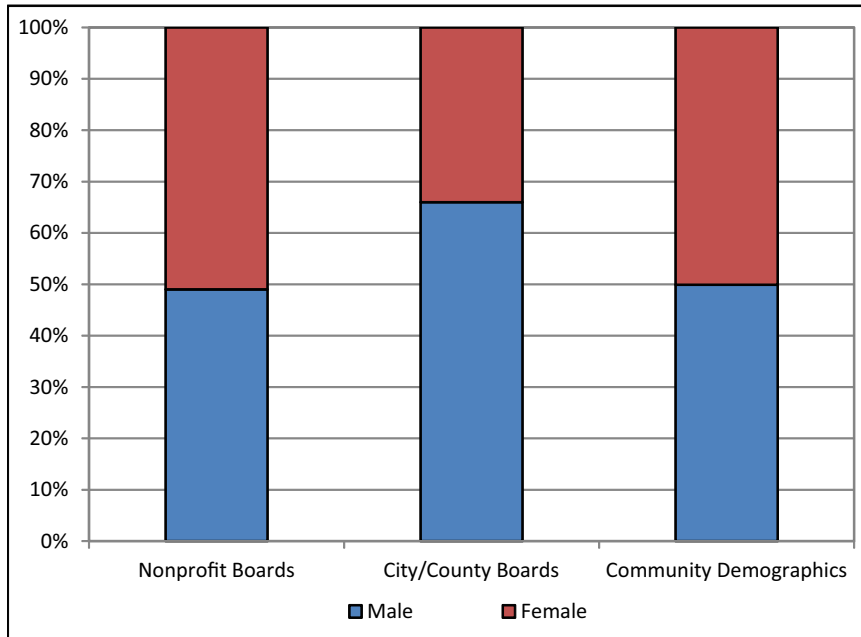
Potential for Action

In order to continue to broaden awareness and acceptance in Colorado Springs, it is imperative to promote opportunities offered by community organizations with the vision of reaching a more diverse representation of the community. One local organization committed to promoting multicultural awareness is Citizens Project (CP), which hosts a Citizens Religious Freedom Institute each spring, encouraging educators, families, and school board members to talk about religious freedom and First Amendment rights in the public school setting. They are also a voting resource and act as watchdog or a venue for recourse. CP also offers opportunities for all people to get involved in the voting process through nonpartisan election forums during every local election.



-Leadership Demographics-

Leadership Demographics - Gender



Source: Pikes Peak Library District, Center for Nonprofit Excellence

These Charts show the composition of local boards in terms of gender and race/ethnicity.

Why is This Important?

A community's leadership comprises both elected and appointed officials and those who step forward to adopt roles on boards, commissions, and community service endeavors. It is important to understand how these leaders intersect with and reflect the populations they serve.

Standards for Excellence® is an ethics and accountability code for the nonprofit sector. It states that "Board membership should reflect the diversity of the communities served by the organization." A homogenous board risks a narrow perspective, which can distort the focus of the mission and limit creativity. However, these statements are not mutually exclusive. In fact, according to *Standards for Excellence*, having a board that is representative of the community served requires a sustained effort, often over many years.

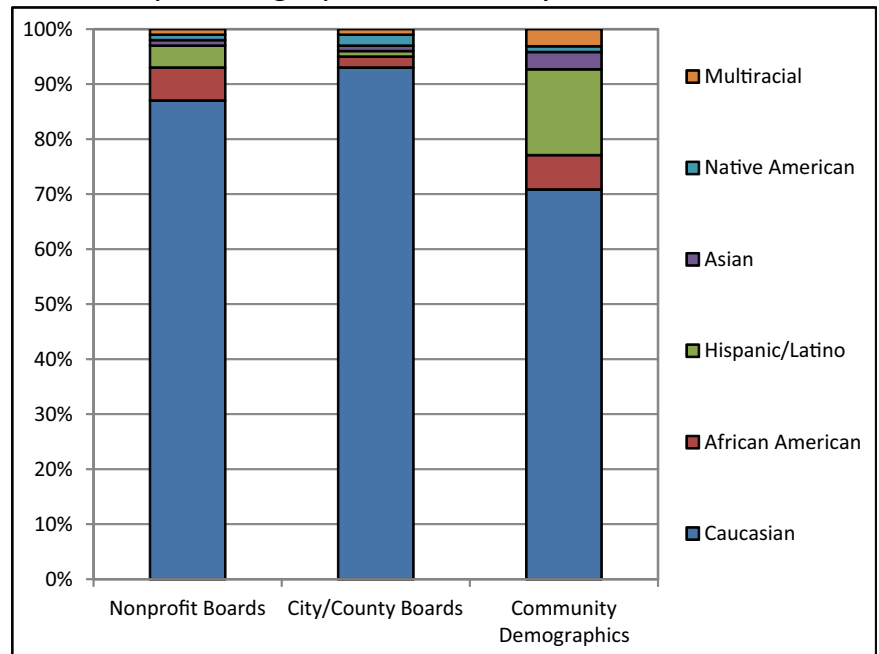
How are We Doing?

Contrasting this data with community demographics indicates representational deficits in gender and race among municipal board and commission members. Municipal leadership is disproportionately male and Caucasian compared to respective service populations.

Nonprofit boards appear more gender relative; however, while the average gender distribution on nonprofit boards is equitable, analysis of individual boards shows that many nonprofit organizations report boards that are heavily weighted toward one gender or the other. Nonprofit boards are also less ethnically diverse than the general population, with 87% Caucasian membership versus the 68% population percentage.

One factor not reflected in these demographics is the relevant experience and program knowledge the some of our leadership has that significantly benefits the populations they serve. Data was collected for the first time on the demographics of nonprofit executive directors, reported as 94% Caucasian and 58% female. Nearly two thirds have more than 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector.

Leadership Demographics - Ethnicity



Source: Pikes Peak Library District, Center for Nonprofit Excellence

Potential for Action

Nearly one-third of municipal boards and commissions and nearly 40% of nonprofit boards consistently operate below capacity, indicating an opportunity for these entities to reflect on their composition as it relates to the populations they serve. Nonprofits and municipalities have the opportunity to bring in staff and develop future leaders to better reflect the community.

The Center for Nonprofit Excellence and other community organizations provide board development resources, recruitment protocols, and standards for evaluation. Organizations such as the Colorado Springs Diversity Forum work to educate individuals on the commitment and information requirements for municipal boards and commissions. Utilizing these resources can improve outcomes and offset some of the effort required to maintain diverse leadership.