

New Mexico Library Foundation Strategic Planning Summary Report

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Introduction

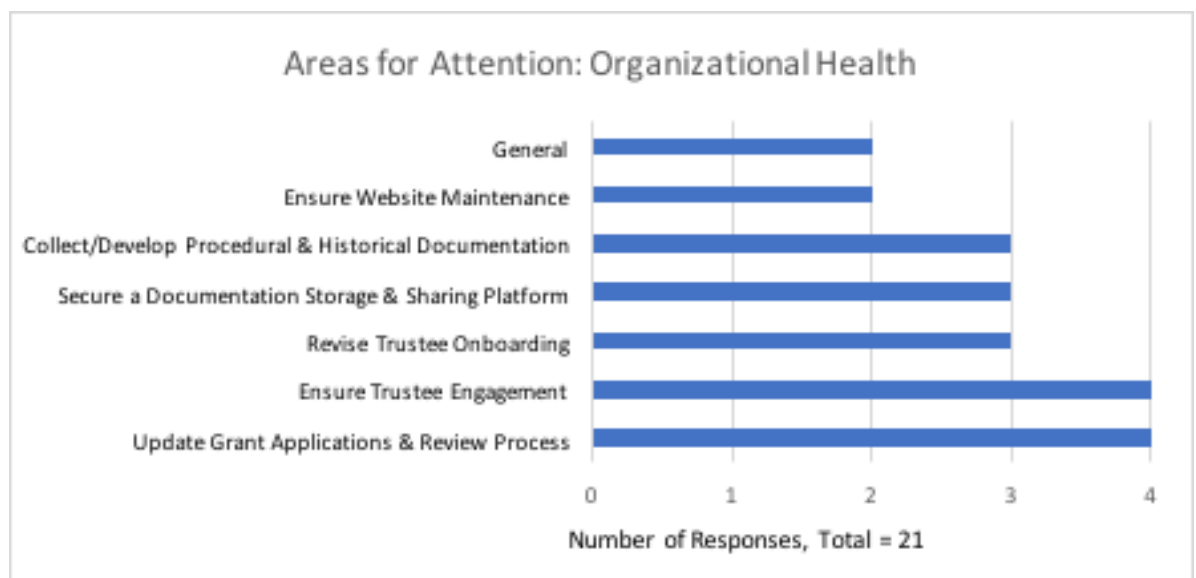
On May 6, 2019, the trustees of the New Mexico Library Foundation (the Foundation) gathered for a strategic planning session in Albuquerque at Central New Mexico Community College's library. The objective of this session was to arrive at a list of goals to achieve during the current service term (through December 2021). This facilitated session's activities included a written idea harvest in response to question prompts, a gallery walk in small groups to review and discuss the idea harvest responses, and a full-group discussion to distill a list of actionable goals and priorities. At the close of the session, the team decided on: an umbrella theme of *Regeneration* to encompass the work, as well as items for both immediate and near-future action. What follows is a review of these priorities and action steps, supported by a synopsis of the group discussion and an initial analysis of written responses to question prompts.

Part I: Regeneration

During the open discussion at the end of the meeting, *Regeneration* emerged as the overall theme to guide the Foundation's goal setting and implementation. Five areas of attention were identified as priorities to support this: Organizational Health, Strong Fundraising, Public Relations & Marketing, Community Engagement, and Ambition. Analysis and coding of the responses to the idea harvest question, "Which areas or functions need attention?" supported these as being shared *Regeneration* priorities among trustees, and included additional suggestions for specific actions.

1. **Organizational Health**: this encompasses the Foundation's internal processes, systems, structures, and roles. Following a discussion about which efforts to prioritize – one that acknowledged the interdependencies among all areas of the Foundation's work, it was decided organizational health is the top matter for attention. This was based the determination that a healthy organization is essential to the success of all other efforts and, by extension, the Foundation's longevity. Key areas for action that emerged during discussion are:
 - Obviate systems and structures, and improve trustee onboarding
 - Identify and document key processes
 - Collect and save organizational historical knowledge
 - Understand and articulate time commitments, roles, and workload (to inform trustee recruiting and retention).

Themes and topics mentioned in the written idea harvest are represented in this chart:

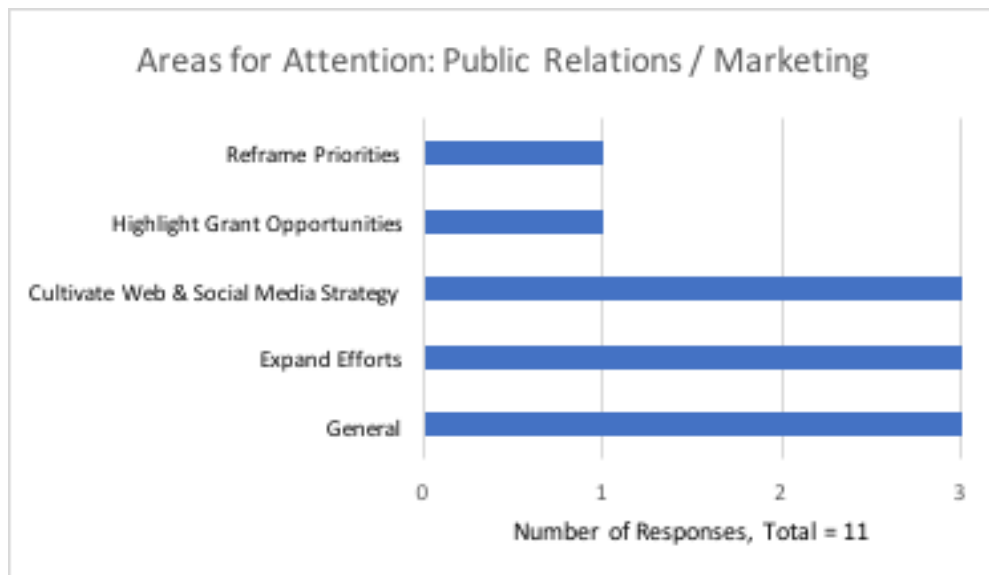


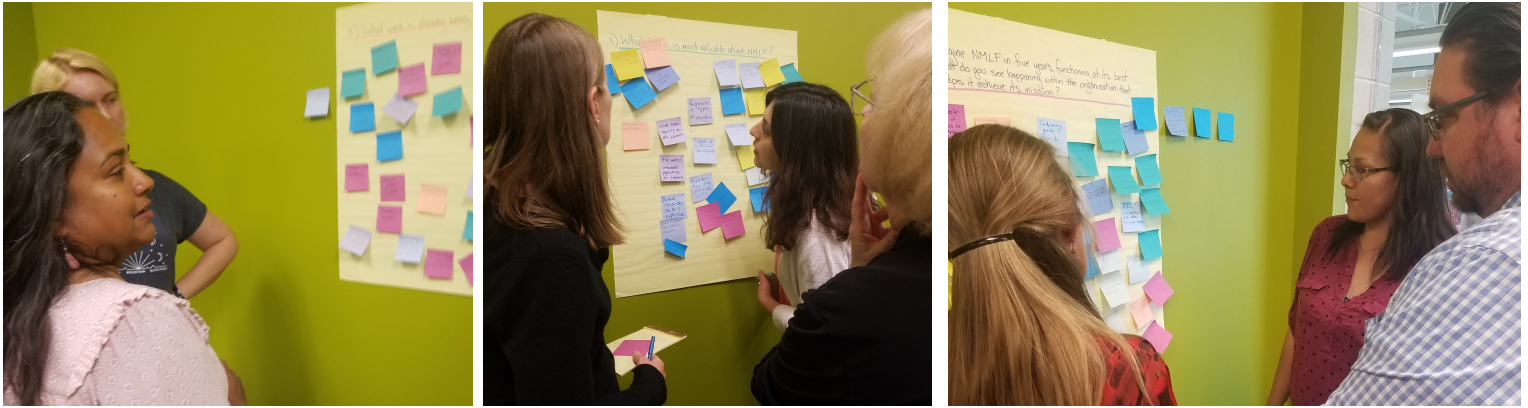
2. **Strong Fundraising:** the idea harvest and following discussion related to fundraising centered around the concepts that improved effectiveness and “new venture” efforts would contribute both to ensuring the Foundation’s regeneration and to enabling a larger number of grants to be awarded. The most immediate need identified was for the compilation and sharing of the donor list, for use in annual appeals and donor stewardship. There is interest in expanding fundraising beyond current efforts (request letters and tabling at the New Mexico Library Association’s annual conference). While there was not opportunity to brainstorm during the discussion, suggestions to pursue corporate sponsorships and to recruit volunteers to support fundraising were mentioned in the idea harvest.

Idea harvest fundraising themes:



3. **Public Relations & Marketing:** the key public relations need that emerged is to increase awareness of the Foundation statewide among the communities of library staff, libraries overall, and a wider circle of library-related associations and organizations. Ideas to help achieve this goal include improving messages and increasing awareness through storytelling, outreach, network building, and engagement. Multiple idea harvest comments suggested the development of a marketing campaign and/or a social media strategy as specific steps to take in this direction.

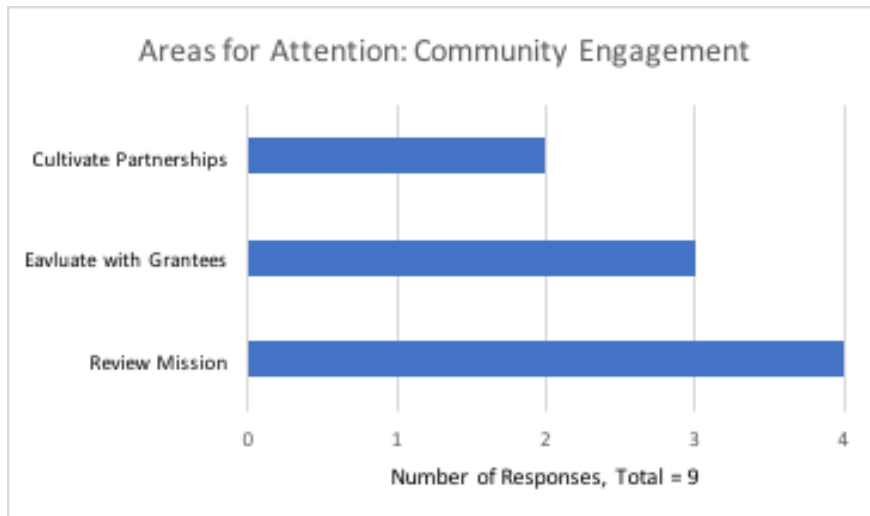




4. **Community Engagement:** during discussion, the trustees arrived at an initial articulation of the connections among the Foundation, grantees, and donors. Needs were identified to: 1) better understand impacts through evaluation with grantees, 2) revisit and update the Foundation’s mission and vision, and 3) cultivate new and strengthen existing organizational and other relationships. In initial summary statements, the goals related to this were phrased as, “understand outcomes, impact, and opportunities and align those with updated mission, vision, and values” and “increase and improve opportunities for donors, grantees, trustees”. Sample answers from the idea harvest question, “What, to you, are the strengths of (the Foundation)?” shed light on current understanding of the Foundation’s impact.

- Support for small rural libraries
- Ability to support NM library collections, programs, etc.
- The ability to fund small but highly impactful programs
- Support of professional development
- Supports ALL library types
- Create extra capacity w/in NM libraries
- Help address vulnerable populations re: literacy
- Highlight the diversity of libraries across NM

Possible methods for further exploring the intersection of Foundation mission, outcomes for grantees, and relationships with donors might include asset-mapping and journey-mapping with trustees, and learning conversations with current and past grant recipients.



5. **Ambition**: this and additional aspirations for the Foundation’s work shine most brightly in the written responses to the prompt, “Imagine (the Foundation) in five years, functioning at its best. What do you see happening within the organization that helps it achieve its mission?”

- Well known across the state
- Establish value of board membership beyond (mostly) (Library and Information Science) community
- Demonstrate impact of grants to facilitate bigger donations passing through (the Foundation)
- Excellent donor stewardship that helps facilitate word-of-mouth donor leads and leads by telling its stories
- Recording and knowing key processes so they can be handed down to next members
- Supporting twice as many libraries through grant opportunities
- Mentality of active collaboration with other (library) organizations
- Engaging donor involvement. Prior recipients on board presenting, continuing supporting.
- Recognized as the go-to foundation for librarians to get funding on things that traditionally aren’t funded in-house

Part II: Immediate Actions

Three functions and topics were identified and slated for immediate action:

1. Document retention and sharing: begin using an interim platform
2. Website cleanup and maintenance
3. Clean-up and share donor list

Note: as of this writing, meaningful steps have been taken on both document sharing and donor list maintenance; and a plan for website maintenance is in development.

Part III: Near-Future Actions

These items were agreed to be important next steps, and will be further planned for during upcoming meetings:

- Identify and secure platforms for long-term document sharing and archiving
- Develop and document trustee onboarding processes for overall, grants review, and individual (committee and other) roles
- Update the grant application
- Review and update the Foundation bylaws, as needed
- Collect, share, and save organizational historical knowledge and documents
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Develop shared calendars, work-back schedules, and timelines for current workflows and functions

For strategic goals identified in the planning session but not yet represented in this list, Foundation trustees are committed to working to set timelines and to identify action steps to achieve them.

Summary

The Foundation’s trustees identified the theme of *Regeneration* to guide their strategic work from the present through December 2021. *Regeneration* includes specific goals in four work areas: Organizational Health, Strong Fundraising, Public Relations & Marketing, and Community Engagement. The trustees also shared aspirations for the future of the Foundation, represented here as Ambition. There are numerous intersections and interdependencies among these goals, and this was articulated during the planning session. This made the determination of where to begin somewhat complicated. It was ultimately decided that Organizational Health was the top priority for attention, as these structures, systems, and processes are foundational to the success of all other work.