

## Results from 2014 “Listen and Learn” Convenings

In the fall of 2014, the Hartford Foundation held a series of 12 convenings by sector to learn more about what our nonprofit partners are seeing as trends in the field, challenges, potential opportunities, and gaps in service. The information will help us to respond to identified gaps and create opportunities where our resources could have a greater impact on our community.

We Heard...	Plans for 2015
Fewer <b>unrestricted dollars</b> are available, although this is the type of support that is most needed to maintain operations.	The Foundation added General Operating Support grants to the array of offerings in 2013. To date, the GOS application criteria have been rigorous and limited to top-performing, financially-stable organizations. The Foundation <b>recognizes the need to expand availability of General Operating Support</b> and is exploring ways to better respond to this need.
There has been an increase in <b>collaboration</b> in the sector. However, this type of activity is costly, and many funders do not pay for the true cost of collaboration.	The Foundation is looking at strategies to enhance effective collaborative relationships and cost-sharing in order to make greater impact in the community. We are also <b>exploring capacity-building opportunities for organizations interested in collaboration</b> , including a plan to release a Request for Proposals to solicit <b>collaborative proposals</b> in select areas in late 2015.
<b>Leadership</b> across sectors is transitioning, and there is concern about who will take over once current leaders retire.	The Foundation helps organizations <b>find diverse new leadership</b> and offers <b>leadership training</b> through the Nonprofit Support Program and community partners. We are looking at additional ways to address leadership transitions in the sector through a regional study in partnership with other community nonprofits.
Nonprofits need better <b>communications strategies and technology</b> , including effective use of social media and marketing of programs.	The Foundation’s Nonprofit Support Program can be a great resource for agencies looking to increase capacity in this area. We encourage agencies to inquire about our <b>Strategic Technology Program</b> and <b>Technical Assistance Grants</b> for marketing and communications planning.
The economy has been challenging for <b>small organizations</b> , as meeting the requirements of many funding sources has become increasingly difficult while others have dried up.	In addition to some of the support we already provide to small nonprofits, such as web resources, workshops and assessments, the Foundation is exploring other issues facing small agencies to determine whether or not there are other ways to better address the needs of this group. We will continue to seek input from small nonprofits as we work on developing these strategies.

Do you have further comments? We value your feedback! Please e-mail us at [programs@hfp.org](mailto:programs@hfp.org).