

**Survey Findings:
Priorities and Strategies Related to
Early Childhood Advocacy among
Arizona Grantmakers Forum Members**



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KEY FINDINGS

Members of the Arizona Grantmakers Forum (AGF) are interested in a broad range of children's issues. According to the survey, half of the member organizations highly prioritize children's physical and mental health in their grantmaking. More than a third highly prioritize early literacy, developmental screening and follow-up, and preschool quality and access.

Roughly two-thirds of AGF members who responded to the survey have funded advocacy efforts in the past three years. Coalition building and grassroots organizing, activities or campaigns designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue, and messaging and communications have been the most common types of support.

Many grantmakers in Arizona want to work together on shared advocacy goals. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents expressed interest in joining a "partnership to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues."

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

As part of its larger project to engage philanthropy across the country to support effective early childhood advocacy and policy, the Alliance for Early Success has recently partnered with the Arizona Grantmakers Forum. One objective of the partnership is to bring Arizona grantmakers together to exchange ideas and best practices. The ultimate goal of the partnership is to improve the effectiveness of grantmaking in Arizona. A first step in reaching this goal is an online survey to 1) learn about member organizations' funding priorities and strategies, 2) learn about their interests in early childhood issues, and 3) gauge their interest in joining a collaboration of grantmakers to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues. This report summarizes the findings from the online survey. (For a description of survey methodology, please refer to the **Appendices**.)

THE SAMPLE

All members of the Arizona Grantmakers Forum (AGF) were invited to complete the survey. Most potential respondents were CEOs, Executive Directors, or Senior Program Officers. Among the 32 respondents, 44% represented a private or family foundation, 19% represented a corporate foundation, and 16% represented a community foundation (**Figure 1**).

Fig. 1. Respondents' Type of Organization, Arizona Grantmakers Forum, 2016

	#	%
Private or family foundation	14	44%
Corporate foundation	6	19%
Community foundation	5	16%
Public foundation	3	9%
Government agency	1	3%
Corporate contributions program	1	3%
Donor-advised fund	1	3%
Other	1	3%
Total	32	100%

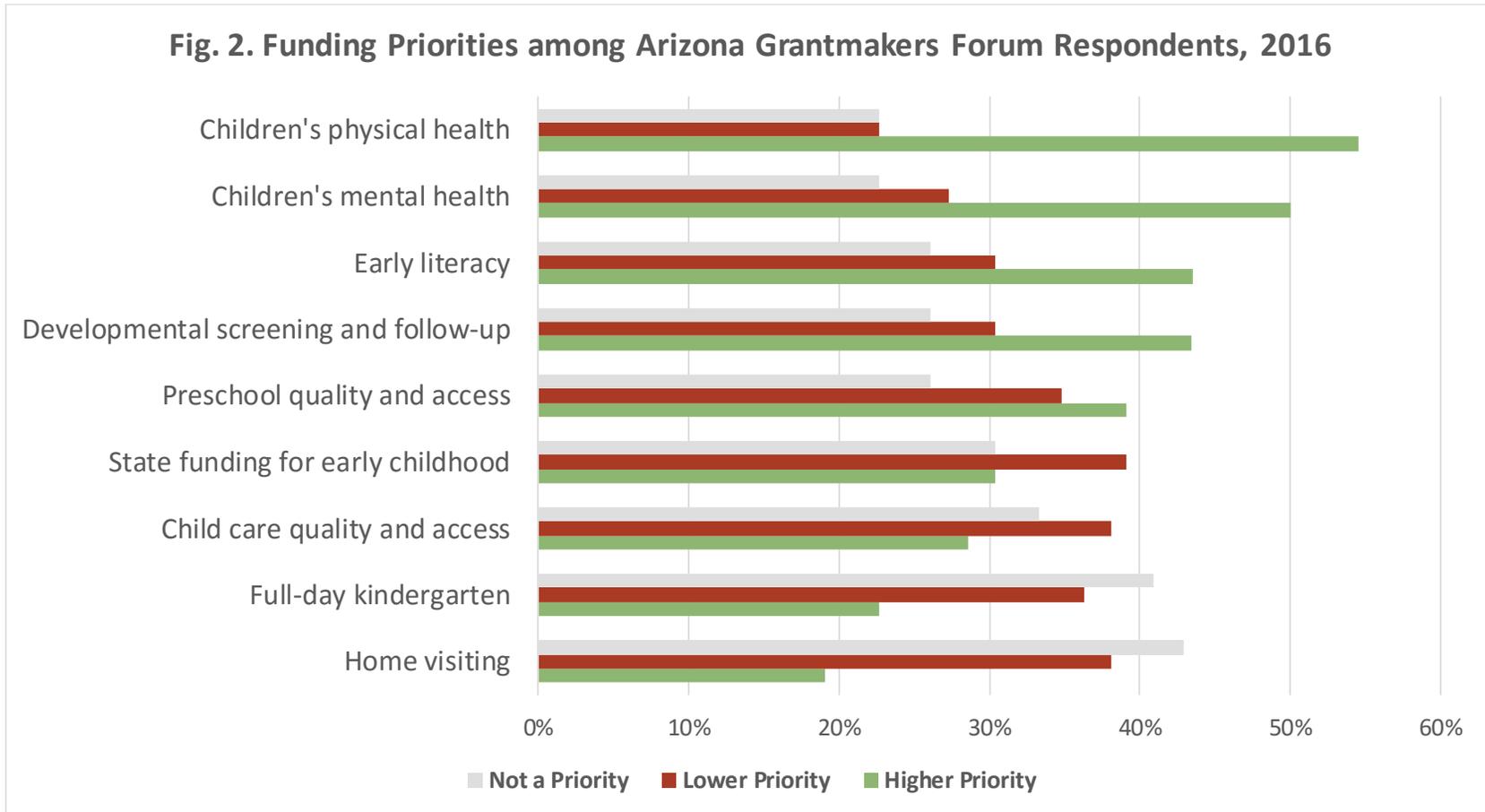
FINDINGS

Funding Priorities among Arizona Grantmakers Forum Members

The survey asked respondents to prioritize issues related to early childhood that are important to their organizations' grantmaking. Children's physical and mental health were prioritized by the highest percentages of AGF members who responded to the survey. Early literacy (to reach reading proficiency by third grade); developmental screening and follow-up to prevent later problems; and preschool quality and access, including professional development were also prioritized, but by slightly lower percentages. Home visiting and full-day kindergarten were prioritized by the lowest percentages of AGF members. Three respondents did not consider any of the early childhood issues as priorities for their grantmaking organizations (**Figures 2 and 3**).

Support for early childhood is strong among AGF member organizations. Grantmakers are clearly concerned about the physical and mental health of Arizona's children. Given the lack of state support for children's health, it is not surprising that grantmakers are interested in improving a system that consumes tremendous amounts of philanthropy's resources. Early literacy and preschool, issues of common concern to foundations nationally, are also important to AGF members. All issues included in the survey were highly prioritized by at least 19% of survey respondents.

Figure 2 summarizes the five categories into three (Not a priority, Lower priority, Higher priority). **Figure 3** shows all five categories (Not a priority, Low priority, Medium, High, Essential priority).



Twenty-two percent of responding organizations ranked “developmental screening and follow-up to prevent later problems” as an essential funding priority. Eighteen percent ranked children’s physical health as an essential priority; 17% ranked early literacy as an essential funding priority.

Fig. 3. Funding Priorities Reported among Arizona Grantmakers Forum Members, 2016

	Priority				
	Not at All	Low	Medium	High	Essential
Children's physical health	23%	18%	5%	36%	18%
Children's mental health	23%	9%	18%	36%	14%
Early literacy (to reach reading proficiency by third-grade)	26%	17%	13%	26%	17%
Developmental screening and follow-up to prevent later problems	26%	17%	13%	22%	22%
Preschool quality and access	26%	17%	17%	26%	13%
State funding for early childhood	30%	17%	22%	22%	9%
Child care quality and access, including professional development	33%	33%	5%	24%	5%
Full-day kindergarten	41%	23%	14%	18%	5%
Home visiting (voluntary home-based parent education)	43%	24%	14%	14%	5%

Type of Support among Grantmakers that Fund Advocacy

Among responding member organizations, 63% have supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years. Among these members, 70% have recently funded coalition building or grassroots organizing, 70% have funded activities designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue, and 65% have funded messaging and communication tools (**Figure 4**). Several grantmakers fund a variety of advocacy-related strategies. Seven organizations have engaged in six or more strategies. One respondent commented, “I feel that supporting advocacy through the non-profits is the key to making change in our communities.”

Fig. 4. Type of Support among Grantmakers that Fund Advocacy, Arizona Grantmakers Forum, April 2013-April 2016

Coalition building or grassroots organizing	70%
Activities or campaigns designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue	70%
Messaging and communication tools	65%
Education for policymakers about an issue	45%
Activities or campaigns designed to influence public opinion about a specific issue	45%
Policy research and analysis	40%
Advocacy by a grantee organization for an issue at the Arizona Legislature	25%
Education for grantees about advocacy and lobbying	10%

Among the organizations that have supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years, 44% spent \$100,000 or more in the past three years on advocacy or public policy. Twenty-two percent said they devoted between \$40,000 and \$69,999 since April 2013 (Figure 5).

Fig. 5. Amount Devoted to Advocacy among Members that Support Advocacy, AGF, April 2013-April 2016	
Less than \$4,999	11%
\$5,000 to \$19,000	6%
\$20,000 to \$39,999	-
\$40,000 to \$69,999	22%
\$70,000 to \$99,000	11%
\$100,000 or more	44%
Don't know	6%
- Less than .5%	

Reasons for Not Supporting Advocacy

Thirty-seven percent of respondents said that their organizations currently do not support advocacy- or public policy-related activities at the Arizona Legislature. The survey asked representatives from these grantmaking agencies to explain the “reasons why your organization has not supported advocacy at the Arizona Legislature during the last three years.” Several (n=5) stated it was not within their mission or “field of interest.”

One respondent suggested that his board is uncomfortable in getting involved with politics: “The Board feels these types of grants are too close to what we are restricted from funding, all political-type grants.”

One respondent said that her foundation is “developing the strategy for how to support” advocacy and public policy.

Three respondents said that their organizations do not support advocacy or public policy, but their responses suggest that their organizations may define funding for advocacy and public policy in different ways:

- “Outside of our grant funding parameters. **We hold information activities with elected officials** but not grants to support advocacy.”
- “Advocacy programs are not funded out of our Corporate Contributions budget. We support those types of activities out of our Government Relations budget.”
- “We would generally not refer to it as “advocacy.” But, what others would describe as advocacy, we would characterize as **raising public awareness and support for early childhood priorities**. In that context, we do just about everything except campaigns.”

Likelihood of Joining Partnership to Support Early Childhood Advocacy

Among respondents, 59% (n=16) are likely or extremely likely to join a collaboration to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues. Another 15% (n=4) are “neutral” (Figure 6). Among these twenty organizations, three have not supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years.

Fig. 6. Likelihood of Joining Partnership to Support Early Childhood Advocacy, Arizona Grantmakers Forum, 2016

Extremely likely	22%
Likely	37%
Neutral	15%
Unlikely	7%
Extremely unlikely	11%
Don't know	7%

APPENDIX 1. METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

In March 2016, Frontera Strategy consultants, Arizona Grantmakers Forum staff members, and Alliance for Early Success staff members collaboratively designed the online survey instrument. The multiple choice and open-ended questions covered: type of organization, involvement in advocacy-related activities, funding priorities, and interest in joining a collaborative for grantmaker-led advocacy. The survey and its findings are confidential. Respondents were given the opportunity at the end of the survey to give their names for follow-up. They could remain anonymous if they wished. We structured the survey so that respondents could skip the items they did not want to complete. The survey took about four minutes to finish.

Sample and Data Collection

All members of the Arizona Grantmakers Forum (AGF) were invited to complete the survey. AGF staff created the contact list with one representative per funding agency. Most potential respondents were CEOs, Executive Directors, or Senior Program Officers. The CEO of AGF emailed members the survey link on April 5, 2016. AGF emailed members a reminder email on April 12. A Frontera consultant made reminder calls on April 14. Frontera Strategy administered the online survey using SurveyMonkey. The survey closed on April 16. Thirty-two respondents completed the survey. The response rate was 52% (32/61).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A Frontera consultant analyzed the data using SPSS. The consultant used descriptive and comparative data analysis techniques including frequencies and cross-tabs. These survey findings are not representative in the statistical sense. Each response represents an important view that a number of AGF members may share. The percentages shown in the tables can act as a guide to interpreting the salience of the responses. When reviewing the findings, readers will want to keep in mind some biases and limitations. For example, it is likely that the people who chose to complete the survey differed in significant ways from people who did not complete the survey. For example, foundation representatives who are more interested in advocacy may have been more likely to complete the survey.

APPENDIX 2. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Welcome

Through this 4-minute survey, Arizona Grantmakers Forum (AGF) would like to learn more about your organization's funding priorities and strategies. Your responses are confidential. Only AGF staff and the survey researcher will have access to survey responses. Responses are also anonymous unless you choose to provide your name at the end of the survey.

As part of its larger project to engage philanthropy across the country to support effective early childhood advocacy and policy, the Alliance for Early Success is pleased to be working with Frontera Strategy and AGF. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Lisa Kerber at Frontera Strategy (512.791.8751 or Kerber@FronteraStrategy.com.)

Q1. What type of philanthropic organization or funding agency do you represent?

1. Private or family foundation
2. Community foundation
3. Corporate foundation
4. Local United Way
5. Other, please describe: _____

Involvement in Advocacy-Related Activities

Arizona Grantmakers Forum would like to better understand its members' funding strategies.

Q2. During the past three years, has your organization provided funding to support any of the following activities? Please check all that apply.

1. Coalition building or grassroots organizing
2. Messaging and tools for communications
3. Policy research and analysis
4. Education for grantees about advocacy and lobbying
5. Education for policymakers about an issue
6. Advocacy by a grantee organization for an issue at the Arizona Legislature
7. Activities or campaigns designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue
8. Activities or campaigns designed to influence public opinion about a specific issue
9. None of the above: My organization has not provided any advocacy-related support during the past three years. (*filter to Q4*)
10. Other, please describe other funded activity related to advocacy.

Amount of Funding Devoted to Advocacy-Related Activities

Q3. (If #9 above, skip) Thinking about the last three years, back to April 2013, approximately how much funding did your organization devote to advocacy in total?

1. Less than \$4,999
2. \$5,000 to \$19,999
3. \$20,000 to \$39,999
4. \$40,000 to \$69,999
5. \$70,000 or \$99,999
6. \$100,000 or more
7. Don't know
8. Other (please comment) _____

Reasons for Not Funding Advocacy-Related Activities

Q4. (If any value other than Q2's #9 above, skip) There are many reasons why some grantmaking organizations do not fund advocacy-related activities. Please explain the reasons why your organization has not supported advocacy at the Arizona Legislature during the last three years.

Funding Priorities among AGF Members

We'd like to better understand your funding priorities related to early childhood.

Q5. How important are the following issues to your organization?

- 1 – Not a priority
 - 2 – Low priority
 - 3 – Medium priority
 - 4 – High priority
 - 5 – Essential priority
 - 6 – Don't know
-
1. Preschool quality and access
 2. Child care quality and access, including professional development
 3. Home visiting (voluntary home-based parent education)
 4. Children's physical health
 5. Children's mental health
 6. State funding for early childhood
 7. Full-day kindergarten
 8. Early literacy (to reach reading proficiency by third-grade)
 9. Developmental screening and follow-up to prevent later problems
 10. Other (please explain) _____

Interest in Joining Collaboration for Grantmaker-Led Advocacy

Q6. How likely is your organization to join other Arizona grantmakers in a partnership to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues?

1. Extremely likely
2. Likely
3. Neutral
4. Unlikely
5. Extremely unlikely
6. Don't know

Survey Participant Information

Just three more questions...

Q7. What is your name please? _____

Q8. What foundation or philanthropic organization do you represent?

Q9. May AGF staff follow up with you if we have any questions about your responses?

1. Yes
2. No

Thanks again for completing the survey. We really appreciate it.