

Survey Findings: Priorities and Strategies Related to Early Childhood Advocacy among Funders in New Mexico



May 2016
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This project was supported by the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group and the Alliance for Early Success.



J. F MADDUX FOUNDATION



Thornburg Foundation



KEY FINDINGS

Foundations in New Mexico that responded to this survey are most concerned about the physical and mental health of the state's children. Early childhood education, home visiting, and early literacy are also top priorities among philanthropists who participated in the survey.

One third of foundations participating in the survey have funded advocacy efforts in the past three years, demonstrating a desire to influence policy. Foundations were most likely to have supported grassroots advocacy and public relations campaigns in recent grants for advocacy-related activities.

Survey respondents included a broad cross-section of New Mexico's philanthropists, not just those interested in early childhood education. Nonetheless, there is clear interest in foundation advocacy in New Mexico, and the New Mexico Funders Group is poised to grow in size and influence.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group is made up of private and public charitable foundations dedicated to improving the lives of babies, young children and their families. The Funders Group has prioritized expansion of high-quality home visiting services and is actively engaging the New Mexico Legislature, the media, state agencies, and others. Participating foundations include Brindle, W.K. Kellogg, Los Alamos National Laboratory, J. F Maddox, McCune, Santa Fe Community, and Thornburg.

While foundations have long been interested in public policy and advocacy, these seven have come together to coordinate grantmaking and mobilize trustees. Efforts to support and promote home visiting include:

- Statewide meetings to determine common early childhood priorities among foundations.
- Educating policymakers about the benefits and accountability of high-quality home visiting services and a series of "Building the Bench" events leading to the creation of a bi-partisan "Early Childhood Caucus" with 20 members.
- Joint funding of credible advocacy partners, including, active-duty police officers and sheriffs, retired United States admirals and generals, and pediatricians.
- Social and print media, including opinion pieces authored by foundation trustees in the state's most important newspapers.

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group has recently partnered with the Alliance for Early Success. The Alliance is engaging philanthropy across the country to support effective early childhood advocacy and policy. One objective of the partnership with the Funders Group is to bring grantmakers in New Mexico together to exchange ideas and best practices. The ultimate goal of the partnership is to improve the effectiveness of grantmaking in New Mexico. A first step in reaching this goal is an online survey to 1) learn about grantmakers' funding priorities and

strategies, 2) learn about their interests in early childhood issues, 3) gauge their interest in joining the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group, and 4) gauge 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

Forty-one people representing grantmaking organizations were invited to complete the survey. Most potential respondents were CEOs, Executive Directors, or Senior Program Officers. Among the 24 respondents, 63% (n=15) represented a private or family foundation, 17% represented a community foundation, and 8% represented a local United Way (**Figure 1**). Two respondents represent foundations that are current members of the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group.

**Fig. 1. Respondents' Type of Organization,
New Mexico, 2016**

	#	%
Private or family foundation	15	63%
Community foundation	4	17%
Local United Way	2	8%
Corporate foundation	1	4%
Public foundation	1	4%
Other	1	4%
Total	24	100%

FINDINGS

Funding Priorities among Grantmakers in New Mexico

The survey asked respondents to prioritize issues related to early childhood that are important to their organizations' grantmaking. Early literacy (to reach reading proficiency by third grade), children's mental and physical health, and early childhood programs were *highly* prioritized by a majority of the funders who responded to the survey. Forty-five percent of organizations said home visiting was a high or very high priority; 39% said it wasn't a priority at all. Three respondents did not consider any of the early childhood issues as priorities for their grantmaking organizations. All issues included in the survey were highly prioritized by at least 29% of survey respondents (**Figures 2 and 3**). **Figure 2** summarizes the five categories into three (Not a priority, Lower priority, Higher priority).

Fig. 2. Funding Priorities among Funders in New Mexico, 2016

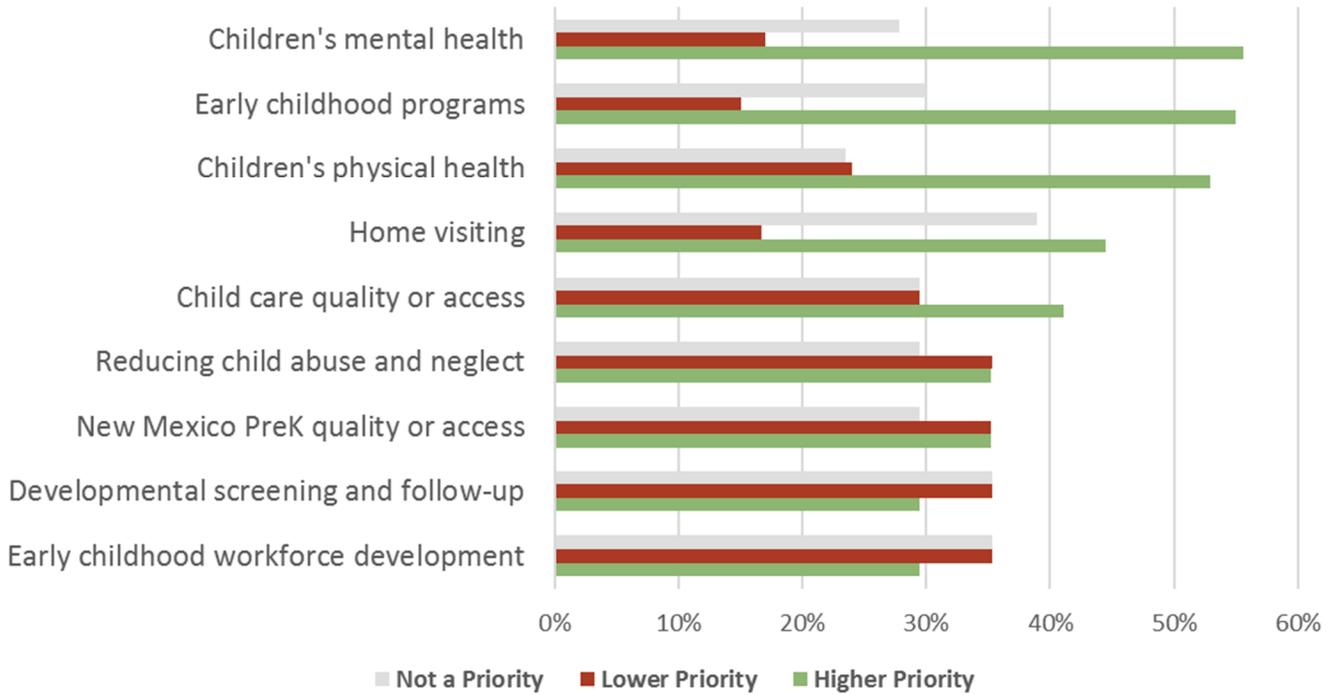


Figure 3 shows all five categories (Not a priority, Low priority, Medium, High, Very high).

Fig. 3. Funding Priorities Reported among Funders in New Mexico, 2016

	Priority				
	Not at All	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Children's mental health	28%	-	17%	17%	39%
Early literacy	28%	6%	11%	28%	28%
Early childhood programs	30%	5%	10%	10%	45%
Children's physical health	24%	-	24%	29%	24%
Home visiting	39%	6%	11%	17%	28%
Child care quality or access	29%	12%	18%	18%	24%
New Mexico PreK quality or access	29%	18%	18%	18%	18%
Reducing child abuse and neglect	29%	6%	29%	18%	18%
Early childhood workforce development	35%	12%	24%	6%	24%
Developmental screening and follow-up	35%	24%	12%	24%	6%

- Less than .5%

Type of Support among Grantmakers that Fund Advocacy

Among responding member organizations, 33% (n=8) have supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years. Among these grantmakers, 21% have recently funded coalition building or grassroots organizing, and 21% have funded activities designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue (Figure 4). Three grantmakers fund a variety of advocacy-related strategies, engaging in four or more or more strategies.

Fig. 4. Type of Support among Grantmakers that Fund Advocacy, New Mexico, 2013-2016

Coalition building or grassroots organizing	21%
Activities or campaigns designed to raise public awareness about a specific issue	21%
Education for policymakers about an issue	13%
Policy research and analysis	13%
Advocacy by a grantee organization for an issue at the New Mexico Legislature	13%
Messaging and communication tools	8%
Activities or campaigns designed to influence public opinion about a specific issue	8%
Education for grantees about advocacy and lobbying	4%

Among the eight organizations that have supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years, seven responded to the question on amount of funding devoted to advocacy in 2015. Four grantmakers spent up to \$39,999. One grantmaker spent \$100,000 or more in 2015 on advocacy or public policy (Figure 5). Findings suggest that these grants made up very small percentages of the organizations' total grantmaking budgets.

Fig. 5. Amount Devoted to Advocacy in 2015 among Members that Support Advocacy, New Mexico

Less than \$4,999	29%
\$5,000 to \$19,000	-
\$20,000 to \$39,999	29%
\$40,000 to \$69,999	14%
\$70,000 to \$99,000	-
\$100,000 or more	14%
Don't know	14%
- Less than .5%	

Reasons for Not Supporting Advocacy

Sixty-seven percent of respondents (n=16) said their organizations currently do not support advocacy- or public policy-related activities at the New Mexico Legislature. The survey asked representatives from these grantmaking agencies to explain the “reasons why your organization has not supported advocacy at the New Mexico Legislature during the last three years.” Most (n=10) stated it was not within their mission. Three foundations said they did not have enough resources to become involved in advocacy.

Likelihood of Joining Collaborations

Among respondents who are not already members of the Funders Group, 24% (n=4) are likely or extremely likely to join the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group to improve early childhood outcomes in New Mexico (**Figure 6**).

Fig. 6. Likelihood of Joining the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group, 2016

Extremely likely	6%
Likely	18%
Unlikely	18%
Extremely unlikely	35%
Don't know	24%

Among respondents who are not currently members of the Funders Group, 24% (the same four) are likely or extremely likely to join a partnership to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues (**Figure 7**). Among these four, one has not supported advocacy or public policy in the past three years. Four organizations that have not supported advocacy in the past three years responded “don’t know.”

Fig. 7. Likelihood of Joining Partnership to Support Early Childhood Advocacy, New Mexico, 2016

Extremely likely	6%
Likely	18%
Unlikely	41%
Extremely unlikely	18%
Don't know	18%

APPENDIX 1. METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

In April 2016, Frontera Strategy consultants, New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group members, and Alliance for Early Success staff 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 to focus on early childhood outcomes and a partnership 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

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group identified 105 grantmaking organizations in New Mexico. Among these, members from the Funders Group and consultants from Frontera Strategy were able to find functional emails for 41 leaders at these organizations (one per funding agency). Most potential respondents were CEOs, Executive Directors, or Senior Program Officers. A Funders Group member emailed an invitation to complete the survey to the 41 potential respondents on April 19, 2016. He emailed them a reminder email on April 26 and again on May 3. Frontera consultants and Funders Group members made reminder calls during the second week of May. Frontera Strategy administered the online survey using SurveyMonkey. The survey closed on May 13. Twenty-four respondents completed the survey. The response rate was 59% (24/41).

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 any number of grantmakers in New Mexico 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. Foundation representatives who are more interested in early childhood issues or advocacy may have been more likely to complete the survey.

APPENDIX 2. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Welcome

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group is made up of private and public charitable foundations dedicated to improving the lives of babies, young children and their families. Through this 4-minute survey, the Funders Group would like to gauge your interest in joining its growing collaboration. The Group would also like to learn more about the funding priorities and strategies of grantmakers in New Mexico. Your responses are confidential. Only staff of the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group 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. Respondents who offer their names will receive a summary of the survey results.

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 the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group. 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

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group would like to better understand the funding strategies of grantmakers in New Mexico.

Q2. During the past three years, back to April 2013, 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 communication tools
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 New Mexico 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 Q5*)
10. Other, please describe other funded activity related to advocacy. _____

Amount of Funding Devoted to Advocacy-Related Activities

These next two questions will help the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group estimate the percentage of funding devoted to advocacy and public policy among grantmakers in New Mexico.

Q3. How much money did your organization provide in grants last year, in 2015?

Q4. (If #9 above, skip) Approximately how much funding did your organization devote to advocacy in 2015?

- 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

Q5. (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 New Mexico Legislature during the last three years.

Funding Priorities among Grantmakers in New Mexico

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

Q6. How important are the following issues to your organization?

- 1 – Not a priority 2 – Low priority 3 – Medium priority
- 4 – High priority 5 – Very high priority 6 – Don't know

- 1. New Mexico PreK quality and/or access
- 2. Child care quality and/or access
- 3. Early childhood workforce development
- 4. Home visiting (voluntary home-based parent education)
- 5. Children's physical health
- 6. Children's mental health
- 7. Funding for early childhood programs
- 8. Early literacy (to reach reading proficiency by third-grade)
- 9. Reducing child abuse and neglect
- 10. Developmental screening and follow-up to prevent later problems
- 11. Other (please explain) _____

Interest in Joining Collaboration

All members of the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group are interested in childhood issues. Some are engaged in advocacy and policy work.

Q7. How likely is your organization to join the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group, which is focused on improving early childhood outcomes?

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

Q8. How likely is your organization to join other New Mexico grantmakers in a partnership to jointly support advocacy for early childhood issues?

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

Survey Participant Information

Just three more questions...

Q9. What is your name please? _____

Q10. What foundation or philanthropic organization do you represent?

Q11. May staff of the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group 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.