



Nonprofit Association of the Midlands

Evaluation Findings Review

August 2021

Nonprofit Association of the Midlands Evaluation Findings Review



Initial Evaluation Overview

Category One Consulting (C1C) conducted a study assessing the value and effectiveness of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM) throughout the course of 2017 and 2018. The study used a program theory approach and was conducted in two main phases focused on planning and implementation. The data sources below were used to create the summary logic model depicted below in order to answer the five research questions listed below.

Logic Model

The logic model below shows how NAM's activities lead to outcomes over time and intended impact.



Data Sources

Eight data sources were used as the foundation for the evaluation.

- Discovery Session with NAM CEO
- 20+ Stakeholder Interviews
- Extant Literature Review
- Internal Document Review
- 9 Workgroup Sessions
- Archival Data Deep Dive
- Member Perception Survey
- Funder Perception Survey

Research Questions

Five research questions were used to assess logic model pathways and other topics of interest around member experience.

1. Do NAM's activities lead to the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes listed above?
2. Which activities have the biggest impact on the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes above?
3. To what extent do organizational characteristics such as size and revenue impact the activity to outcome relationship?
4. To what extent do membership details such as reason for joining and tenure impact the activity to outcome relationship?
5. How well is NAM fulfilling member needs? How does need fulfillment impact the activity to outcome relationship?






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Initial Evaluation Recommendations and Progress

The initial evaluation included key takeaways and recommendations related to each of the research questions and areas of the logic model. The initial 2018 recommendations are listed below along with the 2021 average ratings of how effective NAM believes they have been in responding to the set of recommendations on a 10-point scale. Completed areas of major progress and other wins were also noted during the evaluation findings review session.

Research Area	Recommendations (2018)	Ratings (2021)	Completed Progress (2018-2021)
Activities	Streamline and shorten G&P assessment tools and create a training pathway aligned to each G&P content area. Members seek greater depth than breadth in Professional Development offerings. Positive feedback also highlights the Salary & Benefits Survey and listservs in particular.	 6.46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined G&P tools and using icons for pathways. Products have improved and grown (e.g., 403b, EAP). Simplified S&B tool has increased participation. Launched new RLI to support pipeline of new leaders.
Short-Term Outcomes	Expand offerings to acquire more organizations outside the Omaha area (online, western NE, etc.). Grow and communicate Sector Advocacy to spread NAM's voice and to potential new members. Offer more advanced Professional Development to provide value for longer-term members.	 6.33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership remains stable despite declines across US. Advocacy and public policy role has ramped up. Created virtual programming in basically every area. Expanded NAM staff size to support expanded work.
Intermediate Outcomes	Greater G&P use and compliance impacted each outcome. NAM could make clearer their resources by advertising Professional Development pathways and tools that build from G&P results. G&P scores and member feedback suggest a need for greater resources in Volunteer Management.	 5.83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most engaged members have seen improvements. Members were willing to make tough decisions and innovate in response to COVID-19 pandemic. Overall quality of trainings has improved.
Long-Term Outcomes	Offer support across all G&P-related areas (Fundraising, Volunteer Management, Communication, etc.) and work towards matching members to offerings based on need. Present NAM benefits in a concise and consumable fashion to increase understanding.	 6.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approached by foundations to run new programming. Grown to be main media contact for nonprofit affairs. Monthly member benefit trainings have strong turnout. Elected officials reaching out with greater frequency.
Group Differences	Help remove barriers to smaller organizations' participation in NAM activities (cost, location, lack of member connections, etc.). Consider amended or streamlined processes (shorter G&P, etc.) to reduce burden on smaller and/or funder-required members.	 6.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LMS got fast tracked and has more robust content to serve a wider audience of members. Participation has grown among members in Greater NE. Offered many free trainings to increase access.
Need Fulfillment	Implement training and support in Volunteer Management and Fundraising. Evaluate current training offerings to determine if they are aligned to what members need. Use training feedback forms and G&P data to help determine the training content that members need the most.	 5.58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020 was focused on improving and growing trainings. Elevated some fundraising curriculum. Moved to new space with better training and technology.

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Future Plans and Priorities

The NAM team used components from the initial evaluation findings, the logic model, and their strategic plan to generate potential actions to continue forward progress through a continuous improvement lens. These actions were categorized into work that was more programmatic versus more operational in nature and then prioritized actions into first, second, and third level of importance.

	Programmatic Work	Operational Work
Main Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Direction #2: Investing in Leadership Development • Strategic Direction #5: Strengthening Innovative Benefits & Resources • Logic Model Activities: G&P, Professional Development, Sponsored Networking, Peer Learning, Products & Discounts, Sector Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Direction #1: Expanding NAM's Footprint in Underserved Areas • Strategic Direction #3: Increasing Earned Revenue • Strategic Direction #4: Broadening Staff and Board Capacity
Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create G&P training opportunities aligned to pathways (e.g., 201, 301). • Continue offering virtual training and assess which topics and trainers are best suited to virtual learning. • Develop criteria for selecting trainers who facilitate engaging sessions. • Create a larger and more diverse pool of trainers across the state. • Analyze master list of trainings and develop menu of choices for collaborations and partners who reach out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out processes for NAM's onboarding and HR needs. • Continue underwriting membership costs to expand access. • Conduct full review of cash flow processes (e.g., bill pay sources). • Explore geography-based focus groups and nonprofit collaborations. • Launch Community Advisory Team (CAT) outreach in greater NE. • Partner with community foundations on overall capacity building in Greater NE and for BIPOC serving nonprofits.
Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop curriculum and find training partners in two priority areas of policy and fundraising. • Participate in more events/collaborations outside of Omaha/Lincoln. • Use member survey to ask members what trainings they seek. • Assess member needs for additional roundtables (e.g., small orgs). • Develop next generation of G&P tool improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow staff capacity (e.g., hiring, contractors) to support greater NE. • Provide access to on-demand training content through LMS. • Cross-train staff on LMS content creation and user support. • Explore restructuring pricing models to be more equitable. • Partner with national council partners for online learning MOUs. • Develop simple and effective training evaluation feedback forms.
Priority 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and utilize BIPOC leadership group. • Increase participation in S&B survey and capacity to support this. • Evaluate affinity groups and strategies to support their operation. • Explore new affinity group needs (e.g., nonprofits <\$100k budget). • Assess emerging nonprofit professionals' member needs. • Facilitate member connections for peer support on similar challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Sharepoint review and training to support workflows. • Explore the need for a nonprofit academy program (G&P pathways). • Determine need and process to implement an overall marketing plan. • Consider brand refresh and/or greater adherence to brand standards. • Consider organizing online resources for smaller vs. larger nonprofits. • Explore development of a reward program for longer-term members.