



IPA Conference 2026

What We Heard Matters: Building Better Grantmaking Through Needs Assessments

Key Questions to Consider for Your Nonprofit Needs Assessment

Utilize these questions with your team to help build the Nonprofit Needs Assessment process that's the best fit for your organization and your community.

1) WHY should a funder invest in a Nonprofit Needs Assessment?

These questions can help you determine if a Nonprofit Needs Assessment is a good fit for your team right now.

- *How were our current priorities for nonprofit support determined?*
- *How confident are we that our current priorities accurately reflect the reality for our nonprofit community?*
- *Where are we currently getting information about nonprofit needs in our community?*
- *What voices in the nonprofit community are we not hearing from currently?*

2) HOW do you intentionally design and deliver a Nonprofit Needs Assessment Process for your community that builds trust and produces actionable insights?

These questions can help you design the right Nonprofit Needs Assessment for your needs and your community.

- To Align Purpose with Structures:
 - *Why are we investing in this work?*
 - *What is most important to gain from this process?*
 - *Who needs to help lead this work?*

- To Design Holistic Research Structures and Tools:
 - *What are the strengths and opportunities we think exist for our nonprofit community right now?*
 - *What do we most want to learn in this process?*
 - *Who can tell us more about each of those topics?*
 - *How do we best reach those audiences to hear those answers?*
- To Thoughtfully Engage the Nonprofit Community:
 - *How are we setting people up to understand the purpose and intended outcomes of the research?*
 - *How are we ensuring people feel comfortable sharing their honest thoughts and opinions?*
 - *How should these conversations be designed to ensure we are building trust and effectively meeting our outcomes?*
 - *Who should be leading these conversations to make them as effective as possible?*
- To Capture and Utilize Learnings Effectively:
 - *Who is the primary audience for this research?*
 - *How can we capture the research in a way that will meet our current and future needs?*

3) WHAT can you do to translate nonprofit feedback into stronger alignment, strategy, and action?

These questions can help you ensure the data collected is utilized fully and shared appropriately.

- *How can we ensure the data is actually used to inform decision making vs. just producing a report?*
- *What would we need to do internally to ensure we can act on what we learn?*
- *How will research participants know that their input mattered?*