2012

CAPACITY REPORT

Housing, Shelter Care, and Homelessness: Strengthening the Community through Planned Collaboration

A mixed-method study revealed complementary interests of more than 21 UNLV departments and units and 24 local nonprofit organizations who work in the area of housing, economic development, shelter care, and homelessness. A five-point recommendation plan is provided with the purpose of linking faculty and the community to build the capacity of nonprofits as they work to address the needs of some of Nevada's most vulnerable citizens.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

UNLV | THE LINCY INSTITUTE

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This capacity report is the culmination of a study that was undertaken in Clark County, Nevada, 2011–2012. The primary purpose of the study was to gather information about the needs of local nonprofit agencies who are working in the areas of homelessness, housing, shelter care, and services to vulnerable children and families. A secondary purpose of the study was to analyze the capacity of the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) to assist local nonprofits in capacity building and help them to achieve their service goals. The study ascertained the needs of the nonprofits and then through an analysis of UNLV's past and current engagement with the community, provided an analysis of "fit" and recommendations for building a community-university partnership to better address the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens in the community.

Method

The study included a three-part needs assessment. The first part involved examining various existing data analyses and archived needs assessment reports with the purpose of understanding what data have been recorded about the issues of housing and homelessness in Clark County. The second part consisted of interviewing a group of community participants representing nonprofit organizations and agencies to determine their perceptions of what is needed in Clark County in order to build the capacity of those who work in the area of housing, homelessness, or shelter care. The third part of the needs assessment involved interviews with UNLV faculty and staff. The participants were engaged using self-administered questionnaires, focus groups, and one-on-one, in-depth phone interviews.

Sample

The community participants in this study included 24 administrative leaders representing 23 Clark County nonprofit organizations and agencies and 11faculty and staff members from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas representing 10 different campus units, programs, and/or offices.

Findings

The university faculty and staff participants expressed an overwhelming degree of support for engaging with local nonprofits to help increase their capacity to better serve the community. However, the university participants expressed a concern that they are very limited in both the nature and frequency of their involvement with the

community because of what they perceived as internal barriers. In terms of the community participants, they identified one of the biggest barriers to engagement to be the lack of a centralized university office that directs and organizes engagement, service, and community collaborations. Despite these barriers, both groups of respondents reported that tremendous potential and positive outcomes can be garnered through more planned, organized, and sustained partnerships.

Recommendations

Several critical areas of overlap exist between the needs expressed by representatives from local nonprofits and the capacity, expertise, and interest of university faculty and staff. In order to facilitate and expand engagement activities, the following recommendations are offered: (1) establish a centralized point of contact for the coordination and organization of community-university partnerships; (2) fund a staff position to serve as a designated coordinator of community engagement and collaboration; (3) pilot an engagement project using the service focus discussed herein as the theme for organizing interested groups of faculty, staff, and students to work on targeted projects; (4) develop a marketing and communication plan to be used to engage community and university participants; and (5) leverage and combine multiple funding sources to provide infrastructure support to engage and sustain faculty and student involvement in community engagement projects.

Chapter 1:
Introduction and Background

Introduction and Overview

This capacity report was produced by The Lincy Institute of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) in partnership with the university's foundation office (The UNLV Foundation). The report is the culmination of a three-part study that was undertaken in Clark County, Nevada, 2011–2012. The primary purpose of the study was to gather information about the needs of local nonprofit agencies who are working in the areas of homelessness, housing, shelter care, and services to vulnerable children and families. A secondary purpose of the study was to analyze the capacity of the UNLV to assist local nonprofits in capacity building and help them to achieve their service goals. The study ascertained the needs of the nonprofits and then through an analysis of UNLV's past and current engagement with the community, provided an analysis of "fit" and recommendations for building a community-university partnership to better address the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens in the community.

Following this chapter (Chapter 1), which provides a brief overview of the university and The Lincy Institute, the report is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 provides the context of this report by describing the topics and issues that are the focus of the study. Particularly, the issues of homelessness, housing crisis, shelter care, economic development and assistance, and supports to vulnerable children, women, and families are discussed. Chapter 3 provides a description of the university's capacity as it relates to its engagement with community agencies and organizations who address social and human service issues. Some of the programs, units, and disciplines that have historically been involved with the local community are described. Chapter 4 entails a discussion of the method used to organize data collection for the study. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study's findings and is organized into two sections. The first is a report of the data obtained from community participants and the second includes the data generated from the analysis of university faculty and staff. Chapter 6 provides a comparison of the perceptions of the community participants and the UNLV faculty and staff. It also includes a discussion of the findings and concludes with a set of recommendations.

University of Nevada Las Vegas

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas has a 335-acre main campus with approximately 28,000 students enrolled, of which 7,000 are graduate/professional students. UNLV boasts 13 colleges/divisions and two professional schools that not only provide an education to those enrolled but actively supports the Las Vegas community through practicum experiences, internships, and externships. The integration of student workers into the community reinforces UNLV's mission to "confront the challenges of economic and cultural diversification, urban growth, social justice and sustainability." In this manner and through the precedence of research,

UNLV has established itself as a research-driven university among other institutions of higher learning.

UNLV has made one of its priorities the establishment of active research programs, and as evidence of its success in the area of research UNLV has been ranked in the category of "high research activity" by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. UNLV's commitment to research is demonstrated by the high level of administrative and budgetary support for research projects, a multitude of experienced research centers and institutes (such as The Lincy Institute described below), and a well-developed, three-branch, award-winning library fully equipped with resources and computing support.

The Lincy Institute

The Lincy Institute was established in 2009 with the financial backing of The Lincy Foundation and Mr. Kirk Kerkorian for the purpose of improving Nevada communities by supporting research in education, health, and social services. The mission of The Lincy Institute is to address the state of Nevada's most crucial social issues and problems by contributing to the state's research and development capabilities while supporting UNLV's efforts to produce a highly educated workforce.

The Lincy Institute has established itself as a central resource hub connecting best practices with cutting-edge research to promote its primary goal of addressing the challenges faced in education, health, and social services in the state of Nevada. The Lincy Institute seeks to support innovative, transformational research by providing both data analysis and research support to UNLV and community organizations. The Lincy Institute uses research to build capacity for service providers and enhance efforts to draw state and federal money to the greater Las Vegas area. The Lincy Institute highlights key issues that affect public policy and quality-of-life issues on behalf of children, seniors, and families in Nevada. Its four main goals are to (1) conduct and support research that seeks to improve health, education, and social services; (2) use data and research to inform and improve public policy and practice; (3) build and enhance the capacity of public and private community partners; and (4) secure external financial resources. Through coordination with UNLV, the Lincy Institute provides Senior Resident Scholars in each of these core areas to provide leadership, expertise, consultation, and advocacy in these areas throughout communities in the state of Nevada.

Chapter 2:
Emerging Trends and Critical Issues

The Challenge

The City of Las Vegas conducts a biannual homeless census count as required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (City of Las Vegas, 2010). The purpose of the homeless census is to document the number of homeless individuals and families in the southern Nevada area in an effort to collect demographic data and other pertinent information for combating the problem of homelessness (City of Las Vegas, 2010). According to the City of Las Vegas website, the number of homeless individuals and families has increased from 2007 to 2009 with people living in some type of sheltered housing nearly doubling and people living on the streets decreasing by approximately 700 individuals (City of Las Vegas, 2010).

Factors that have contributed to the latest trend in homelessness in the city of Las Vegas include the following: lack of suitable employment opportunities for high school dropouts and those with only a high school education, insufficient mental health services, and the growing scarcity of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families (City of Las Vegas, 2010).

The 2009 Homeless Census and Survey estimated that there were 13,338 homeless people in southern Nevada with 7,004 of them residing in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs (SNRPC, 2009). While the number of homeless people in sheltered care nearly doubled from 2007 to 2009, the total population of homeless in southern Nevada increased by only 17% (SNRPC, 2009). The report further notes that the increase in the "sheltered" population was due to the efforts made by Clark County Social Services to provide emergency shelter and transitional housing to those in need (SNRPC, 2009). Despite those efforts, 32% of those surveyed were homeless for longer than a year, 7% had children under the age of 18 in their care, 74% were male and 26% were female, and 26% were high school dropouts (SNRPC, 2009).

Recession factors affected the number of homeless in southern Nevada as unemployment and housing-related problems were among the primary reasons cited for homelessness by those surveyed during the 2009

The effect of the 2008 recession is especially apparent in Nevada. In Nevada, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cases have gone up in this recession but this is not the case nationally. Additionally, Nevada is among the states that have witnessed a doubling of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) caseloads between 2007 and 2011. In Nevada there was an average of 121,000 women and children (families) receiving food stamps in 2007. This grew to 275,000 in 2010 and 332,000 in 2011. This is a 175% growth rate from 2007–2011.

homeless census (SNRPC, 2009).   Nevada's unemployment rose to 14.9% at its height in 2010, due mostly to the recession affecting the rest of the nation and resulting in less tourism business for Nevada (Luhby, 2012), and has recently dropped to 12.6% in 2012, still higher than the national rate. Nevada's economic dependence on leisure, retail, hospitality, and construction businesses created a local economic downturn far worse than the national average due to these industries making up more than 50% of Nevada's core employment (Moody's Analytics, 2010). Sixty-six percent of respondents during the 2009 homeless census reported that they became homeless as a result of losing their employment, while 94% of respondents reported being unemployed at the time of the census count (SNRPC, 2009). In addition to the overall impact on unemployment rates as a result of Nevada's dependence on a few key industries, this dependence creates instability as it is difficult to predict future workforce needs, thus affecting household, business, and government expenditures (Moody's Analytics, 2010). The damage to Nevada's labor markets as a result of the recession and the state's volatile economy created a greater reliance on home equity by homeowners, diminishing this asset and adding to the housing and foreclosure crisis in the state (Moody's Analytics, 2010).

Nevada, particularly Clark County, has faced the nation's toughest housing market in recent years due to the number of foreclosures brought on by the 2006 housing bubble (Daneshvary, Jones, & Clauretie, 2010). By June 2009, data revealed that 66% of housing sales in Clark County were for foreclosed or REO (real estate owned) properties during the prior 18 months. This situation, combined with the bottoming out of the construction industry and the lack of economic diversification in Nevada, has greatly affected the overall population (Brown, 2012; Daneshvary, Jones, & Clauretie, 2010).   The crisis has greatly contributed to the problem of homelessness in southern Nevada, as 14% of those surveyed indicated several "housing related" reasons for becoming homeless (SNRPC, 2009).   Respondents reported causes for homelessness related to housing such as increases in rent, property sold or reused by landlord, rental property in foreclosure, or the personal loss of a home due to foreclosure (SNRPC, 2009). These issues must be addressed if individuals and families in Clark County are to rebound from the effect of the economic downturn.

In addition to employment and housing issues, health care, particularly access to care for chronic conditions and mental health services, was among other issues that create financial strain with 41% of those surveyed during the 2009 homeless count indicating that they use emergency rooms for medical care and 22% indicating that they were unable to receive medical attention when they needed it (SNRPC, 2009).   Researchers have noted that poverty in Southern Nevada has greatly contributed to the decline in the "quality of life" in the area with basic needs such as food and shelter contributing to poor health and social conditions (Moody's Analytics, 2010).

 The effect of the 2008 recession is especially apparent in Nevada. Although the recession ended officially in 2009, Nevada is still feeling its effects. For example, Nevada is one of four states (California, Florida, and Michigan are the others) where the number of children whose parents are among the long-term unemployed is especially high (Isaac, 2011; 2012). Women with children and female-headed households have felt the brunt of the recession in Nevada. Long before the current recession we knew that what makes women particularly vulnerable and marginalized as it relates to economic issues is their status as caregivers and mothers. Child poverty is inextricably tied to women's economic conditions. In Nevada, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cases have gone up in this recession but this is

not the case nationally. Nevada is among the states that have witnessed a doubling of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) caseloads between 2007 and 2011. In Nevada there was an average of 121,000 women and children (families) receiving food stamps in 2007. This grew to 275,000 in 2010 and 332,000 in 2011. This is a 175% growth rate from 2007–2011 (Isaac, 2011; 2012).

Nevada was ranked in the bottom 10 states overall in the following four areas regarding children and homelessness: child homelessness, child well-being, risk for child homelessness, and state policy and planning efforts (The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2009). Furthermore, the 2009 Homeless Census and Survey in southern Nevada did not accurately reflect the effect of homelessness on children as the numbers in the report do not include the total number of homeless students counted by the Clark County School District (CCSD) (SNRPC, 2009). The CCSD estimated that 5,326 children were homeless as of April 16, 2009, with families reporting a variety of housing circumstances including living in hotels/motel, living with other families, and living in shelters and in vehicles (SNRPC, 2009). While the survey committee reports that the lack of focus on children is due to the strict HUD definition of homelessness, the effect of homelessness on the "uncounted" children in southern Nevada remains.

Overview of Services by Local Providers

The local agencies participating in this study provide a wide range of services to address the needs of the community with regard to unemployment, homelessness, shelter care, and other housing-related issues. The services provided encompass preventative services, crisis services, and transitional services to assist individuals and families facing a multitude of economic changes during the recession and economic recovery. These services have been categorized into the following areas: emergency services, shelter care, housing services, financial counseling, employment services, health services, and recreation.

Emergency Services

A number of emergency services are available to individuals and families in southern Nevada including rental assistance, utility assistance, food, transportation, and shelter. These services are made available to families who have experienced an unexpected circumstance that has rendered them unable to provide for their basic needs. These services are provided to prevent further deterioration and act as a tangible intervention for families and individuals in crisis. The goal of these services is to sustain the family during the crisis so that they may continue to provide for their basic needs and to prevent homelessness.

Shelter Care

Shelter services for individuals, families, and homeless youths are provided to the community through a number of agencies and organizations. These services seek to assist clients in transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency with a variety of shelter and housing programs. As with any type of emergency shelter service, the program is limited by shelter size and number of available beds for those seeking shelter. The increased demand for shelter services has created a greater need for collaboration among shelter care providers in the

community. Furthermore, many providers seek collaboration that assists in moving individuals and families into permanent housing. Agencies and organizations can help a client successfully navigate from homelessness to shelter care to transitional housing to stable permanent housing through the collaborative local efforts.

Housing Services

Housing services provided to the community by local agencies and organizations include transitional housing, housing classes, advocacy, homeownership programs, and foreclosure and loss prevention programs. The array of services provided reflects the needs of the community and the current foreclosure trend. While some families may need immediate housing, other families may need assistance in preventing the foreclosure of their homes or assistance with financing a home. Many of the local providers address a very specific aspect of the housing issue in southern Nevada, yet all of the agencies and organizations providing housing services share the common goal of creating or maintaining affordable permanent housing for local families.

Financial Counseling

Local organizations and agencies provide financial counseling through a variety of methods including life skills classes, one-on-one counseling, and financial workshops for individuals and families seeking debt management, bankruptcy counseling, credit management, and skills for money management. These services are sometimes provided with housing services, shelter care services, or transitional housing services.

Employment Services

Many local providers assist clients who have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time with job readiness skills such as interview techniques, résumé writing, and placement services. Transitional housing and other housing providers include job readiness and employment services as a key component of their housing program, as a livable wage is viewed as a pathway to stable and permanent housing. Vocational training programs and work programs are provided to a number of vulnerable populations in the community in an effort to reduce reliance on government assistance or the risk of homelessness.

Health Services

Health education and health care services are provided through a number of providers in the community. Health education workshops, health and dental clinics, and health service events are provided throughout the community to assist vulnerable populations including children, the homeless, seniors, and people living in rural areas. These services often bring several providers together to address the needs of a particular population or high-risk area. Several agencies have the capacity to host their own health care events without the inclusion of other providers.

Recreation

Several local agencies or organizations provide needed recreational programs for youths including recreational facilities, camps, low cost/free sports programs, after-school programs,

child care, and mentoring for children and youth. These agencies or organizations, while providing a multitude of services to children and youths, also focus on family health, fitness, and other interests of the surrounding communities/neighborhoods.

Projection of Capacity and Need

Many local agencies and organizations have made adjustments to services due to the demands of the recession, a slow-growing economy and an increased need for services. Many agencies and organizations are finding that more services are needed as the recession changed the face of those needing services with many low-middle class families falling into low-economic brackets. Even more concerning is the plight of those individuals and families who were already vulnerable prior to the recession. The following three key areas have been identified for the capacity and needs of local organizations and agencies: funding, collaboration, and technical support.

Funding

Funding continues to be a need for local community agencies and organizations as the economic downturn and gradual recovery has limited charitable giving while the demand for services has risen due to the increase of individuals and families in need of assistance. These community agencies and organizations have to carefully balance the issues brought about by this decrease in available funding and increase in demand for services. Some of the funding issues facing agencies include proper staffing, meeting demands for direct services provided to clients, expanding services, and funding technical support for marketing, research, or grant writing/reporting activities.

Collaboration

Many agencies and organizations have attempted to accommodate the increase in demand for services by participating in collaborative efforts on a host of issues. Collaboration allows for agencies and organizations to meet some of the increase in direct service demands through referral and to brainstorm on similar problems that the agency or organization may face with reductions in funding. While greater collaboration is welcomed, desired, and pursued, the manpower, expertise, and technical abilities necessary to create effective networks among agencies has not manifested, as collaboration has become increasingly technical with the use of the internet, websites, and social media. Thus, the need is for future collaboration to be streamlined, use advances in technology and social media, and include a wider range of agencies and organizations.

Technical Support

        Technical support provided to agencies can include grant-writing services, marketing assistance, and research and policy reporting services. Often, direct service providers are unable to focus as much of their efforts in this area as they would like due to limited staff or limited

expertise. Additionally, providers may not be aware of technical support available to them in the community by UNLV in the form of student assistance or faculty expertise. Technical support is often seen as a service that requires allocation of specific funding versus the utilization of free or low costs services in the community. Generally, free services such as student internships are applied to direct services to clients rather than to the technical support of the agency. Resources in this area may be used more effectively with greater collaboration and information sharing.

Chapter 3:
UNLV Capacity

Programs, Disciplines, and Units

Founded in 1957, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas offers over 220 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs through its 13 colleges and divisions. These programs offer support to the Clark County community through research, program design, and student experiential education. Through faculty commitment to research and academic program development centered on the most pressing needs of the community, UNLV is an asset to the Las Vegas community and surrounding areas as the following programs, disciplines, and units have the capacity to collaborate or have collaborated in the past with local nonprofits and agencies on the issues of homelessness, shelter care, housing issues, and unemployment: School of Social Work, School of Business- Marketing, Nevada Children's Research Initiative, Computer Science-Information Technology, Department of Criminal Justice, School of Education, Health Science, and the School of Dentistry.

School of Social Work

The School of Social Work is committed to the study of a variety of social problems that affect individuals and families including those problems that are unique to Nevada. Faculty and students are committed to seeking solutions to the social problems that accompany Nevada's ever-changing economic and social environment. The undergraduate and graduate degree programs in social work require that students participate in a practicum experience in which they apply social work practice and principles while working with local agencies, organizations, and nonprofits. In addition, the faculty at the School of Social Work is committed to researching and collaborating with community leaders on social problems such as poverty, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, and social policy.

Lee Business School–Department of Marketing

The Department of Marketing understands the importance of messaging and promotion for organizations and nonprofits in meeting their goals and objectives in the latest social media–driven world. Keeping with UNLV's tradition of community commitment, the Lee Business School through the marketing department continually seeks opportunities to bring new and innovative ideas to the greater Las Vegas community. Students participate in experiential education through marketing internships for credit with various businesses, organizations, and

agencies in the community. For example, marketing students recently participated in a food drive for UNLV students using their marketing knowledge, tools, and skills to promote the drive and accomplish their donation goals. Faculty and students are eager to develop these types of opportunities to provide greater support to their community and represent Nevada on a national scale.

Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy

The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) was founded in 1998 through the vision of Sandy Miller, the former First Lady of Nevada, and operates as a part of the School of Community Health Sciences. The mission of NICRP is to conduct "community-based" research on issues related to children and their well-being. NICRP hopes that collaborative research on children's issues will promote policy changes and represent Nevada's children on a broad range of policy issues. NICRP provides the following services to public and private community agencies: legislative bill draft request tracking, data analysis, data collection, evaluation research, grant development, legislative advocacy, legislative bill tracking, legislative briefing book, policy analysis and briefs, program development, program evaluation, summit planning, technical assistance, and training and education.

Department of Computer Science–Center for Information Technology and Algorithms

The Department of Computer Science houses the Center for Information Technology and Algorithms (CITA), which focuses on information technology as it pertains to theoretical and applied research. CITA is multidisciplinary and collaborative in nature, seeking to promote national and international collaborations through UNLV's various academic programs. Furthermore, CITA seeks to further "algorithms advances" in information and communication technology in research methods and through its involvement in a number of funded research programs and collaborative research centers.

Department of Criminal Justice

The faculty at the Department of Criminal Justice is interdisciplinary and committed to "policy-oriented" research. Research is funded by the Center for Analysis of Crime Statistics to increase Nevada's voice in decisions by policy makers on a variety of important community issues. Students are encouraged to participate in criminal justice internships to gain experience and build relationships within the community, including assisting with the compilation of data and other research-oriented activities. Topics of faculty and student interest include human trafficking, domestic violence, and community safety.

College of Education

The College of Education centers its undergraduate and graduate degree programs on the practice of teaching and learning, research, and the advancement of education in the community. The College of Education houses UNLV's Center for Research and Evaluation Assessment (CREA), which provides expert consultation and information on research topics such as program evaluation, research design, quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, teaching evaluations, and system evaluations. CREA participates in several community research collaborative efforts and seeks to continue its efforts with the advancement of new projects. Similar to other schools and colleges, students in the undergraduate and graduate degree programs participate in experiential learning in the community through a variety of internship positions, assisting community schools and agencies with their education needs.

School of Community Health Sciences

The School of Community Health Sciences program provides undergraduate and graduate degrees focused on public health and health education while interfacing with the community to promote its core values. The program seeks to advance social justice, address health problems, and advance the health of vulnerable populations including minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and other marginalized populations. The program emphasizes "community-based participatory research" and strives to provide such opportunities for research through its academic programs. Students receive experiential education through internships, working closely with faculty, practitioners, and the community.

School of Dental Medicine

As part of the School of Dental Medicine's commitment to education and research, the school seeks out opportunities to provide southern Nevadans with quality, low-cost dental care. This commitment has led to regular community outreach through community clinics and participation in special community events to reach out to at-risk populations and areas in the community. The School of Dental Medicine participates in Project Homeless Connect each year and provides low-cost dental services in hard-to-reach rural areas in Nevada.

History of Partnerships and Alliances

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas maintains its commitment to education, research, and to Nevada through the collaboration with the community on student education, research, and grant projects. UNLV's various academic programs, disciplines, and specialty units seek to support the commitment of the university to research-oriented activities that improve and educate the community. This support is represented through student internships, community research, and collaboration of grant projects with community agencies.

Student Internship

Many of UNLV's academic programs require many of its students to participate in a number of experiential learning opportunities in the community and in the scope of their stated field. Student internships provide local private and public agencies with the manpower necessary to carry out functions essential to the agency, such as direct client contact, research activities, and marketing and technical assistance. Students are a valuable yet sometimes underutilized resource, as greater collaboration is possible through untypical placement opportunities. This is an area of unlimited possibilities as local agencies could meet their needs for program design, marketing, information technology, website building, social media promotion, charity event planning, grant writing, research, and services to clients through the use of UNLV's student body.

Currently, programs through the Department of Social Work, College of Education, School of Community Health Science, Department of Criminal Justice, School of Dental Medicine, the William Boyd School of Law, Department of Marketing, the Lee Business School, and many other programs provide student workers to the community. These programs are regularly exploring new placement opportunities and ways to improve the community through student experiential learning. While UNLV continues to promote student internships through academic program design, there is room for improved effort in the community.

Research and Collaboration on Grant Projects

UNLV's research goals are evident in the various research-based units housed within the colleges, schools, and departments throughout the campus. UNLV has been a consistent community partner in research, participating in a range of research projects throughout the community both funded and unfunded with faculty members appearing as principal investigators, lead evaluators, research design experts, and data collection experts and providing expertise on a variety of academic subject matter and social problems. UNLV faculty expertise include but are not limited to the areas of energy and environment, infrastructure and technology, education,

health, social services, and business/hotel administration. The Board of Regents has approved the following list of centers, labs, institutes, and museums for research, scholarly activity, and/or community service:

- Center for Business and Economic Research
- Center for Entrepreneurship
- Lied Institute for Real Estate Studies
- Nevada Small Business Development Center
- American Indian Research and Education Center
- Center for Health Disparities Research
- Center for Health Information Analysis
- Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy
- Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Center for Education Policy Studies
- Center for Research, Evaluation and Assessment
- Center for Mathematics and Science Education
- Center for Multicultural Education
- Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center
- Cannon Survey Center
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
- Public Lands Institute
- Center for Energy Research
- Center for Information Technology and Algorithms
- Center for Materials and Structures
- Center for Mechanical and Environmental Systems Technology
- Nevada Center for Advanced Computational Methods
- Nevada Nanotechnology Center
- Transportation Resource Center
- Arnold Shaw Center for Popular Music
- Natural Energies Advanced Technologies Laboratory (NEAT)
- Harrah Hospitality Research Center
- International Gaming Institute
- Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution
- Black Mountain Institute
- Center for Democratic Culture
- English Language Center
- Women's Research Institute of Nevada
- Center for Gaming Research
- Oral History Research Center
- The Lincy Institute
- Brookings Mountain West
- Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies
- Marjorie Barrick Museum
- Interdisciplinary Center for Aging Research and Education (ICARE)
- National Supercomputing Center for Energy and the Environment
- Applied Geophysics Center/Applied Geophysics Laboratory
- Center for Applied Mathematics and Statistics
- Center for Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences (CAOS)
- Center for Urban Horticulture and Water Conservation
- High Pressure Science and Engineering Center
- Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach
- Jean Nidetch Women's Center

- Center for Analysis of Crime Statistics
- Center for Individual, Couple and Family Counseling

Through these research units, UNLV has a strong history of providing specialized research services and academic expertise to the community. Additionally, the university has consistently sought community partnership on issues that are unique to Nevada. A list of a few of UNLV's most current research projects and community collaboration is listed below.

- Data analysis and evaluation services to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Southern Nevada
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program Evaluation
- Nevada Children's Data Center
- Evaluation of the Nevada State Safe Injections Awareness Campaign
- Annual Nevada Kindergarten Health Survey
- NV Silver Stars Quality Rating Improvement System Pilot Project Evaluation
- Clark County Child Death Review–Team Coordination and Data Management
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) Evaluation and Legislative Strategies
- UNLV/CCSD Collaborative for Ell
- Imagine Learning Evaluation
- CCSD Empowerment Study
- Build Nevada Evaluation
- City of Las Vegas Batteries Included
- Merrill Publishing
- Voyager Reading Program
- The Family Project
- Clinics and Health Fairs
- Project Homeless Connect

Technical Capacity and Data Capabilities

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas has many options for technical assistance and data analysis. Many of the research units described above can provide the data and technical capabilities necessary for sound research that adheres to proper research protocols and specializes in specific research methodologies and topic expertise.

Cannon Survey Center (CSC)

The Cannon Survey Center is housed within the Division of Educational Outreach and has provided multi-modal data collection capabilities and assessment services in Nevada since 1977. The CSC provides assistance with numerous research methodologies but specializes in survey methods. The following products and services are available through the CSC: research design, telephone survey, focus group design and moderation, intercept survey design and administration, bilingual survey administration, mail surveys with optical scan capabilities, sampling frame development, questionnaire development, form design, data collection, data entry, data coding, data management, data analysis, and report writing.

Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP)

The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy provides technical assistance, data collection, and data analysis for community partners on issues affecting children and families. The NICRP often assists community agencies and organizations through sponsor-requested projects that enable them to provide data and technical capabilities as requested by a community partner. The NICRP often collaborates with UNLV's faculty experts when providing such assistance and has worked with many local agencies and organizations to provide much-needed data collection, analysis, and technical support for local projects and research.

Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER)

CBER provides academic expertise in the area of the economy, particularly southern Nevada's local economy. CBER provides assistance to local agencies and organizations in the areas of local economic data collection and market analysis. Through these services CBER can analyze the effect of various proposed policy or economic changes on the local economy. CBER services include market research, demographic analysis, financial feasibility studies, economic impact analysis, regional impact studies, labor studies, research design, statistical analysis, data preparation, and report writing. CBER has collaborated with many local government agencies, private and public agencies, and organizations on numerous economic issues.

This section has highlighted a few of the units at UNLV that provide technical and data support services for local research and projects. There are numerous other units at UNLV as listed in this report that provide similar data collection and technical support services in specific areas of expertise.

Chapter 4: Method

Method Overview

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of the study was to gather information about the needs of the community and how to build a community-university partnership to better address those needs. The study included a three-part assessment. The first part of the study involved examining various existing data reports that are available in the public domain and archived needs assessment reports with the purpose of understanding what data have been recorded about the issues of housing and homelessness in Clark County. The second part involved interviewing a group of community participants representing nonprofit organizations and agencies to determine their perceptions of what is needed in Clark County in order to build the capacity of those who work in the area of housing, homelessness, or shelter care. The community participants were engaged using self-administered sociodemographic questionnaires profiling the capacity of nonprofits, focus groups, and one-on-one, in-depth phone interviews. The third part of the needs assessment involved interviews with UNLV faculty and staff who are recognized experts in the areas of housing, homelessness, shelter care, and services to vulnerable families. The faculty and staff were engaged using self-administered questionnaires, focus groups, and one-on-one in-depth phone interviews.

Research Participants

The community participants in this study included 24 administrative leaders representing 23 Clark County nonprofit organizations and agencies and 11 faculty and staff members from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas representing 10 different campus units, programs, and/or offices. Participants who were invited to participate had to meet the following criteria: (1) be currently serving in an administrative or managerial capacity at a nonprofit agency or organization, or (2) be a UNLV faculty or staff member with expertise in issues related to housing, shelter care, homelessness, or economic development.

The sampling frame used to recruit UNLV faculty and staff participants was assembled by conducting research on faculty interest and discussing with deans, directors, and chairs the areas of focus represented within their units. In partnership with Credit One Bank, the community participant sampling frame was assembled by identifying those local nonprofits whose service area includes housing, shelter care, economic development, and supports to vulnerable children and families. The organizations were also affiliated with Credit One Bank in that they received grant support or they were members of the Credit One Bank–sponsored initiative *Community Partnership for Opening Doors Collaboration*. The lead administrator of the nonprofit organizations received an invitation seeking their voluntary participation in the study.

Measures

The nature of the study was qualitative and a mixed-methods assessment approach was used including the following methods: archival data, interviews, surveys, and focus groups. An interview questionnaire was developed to gather information about the participants' perceptions of community needs. Separate questionnaires were developed for community participants and UNLV faculty and staff. The interview questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions or probes and each participant was given an opportunity to express their perceptions during recorded focus group sessions or one-on-one interviews. In addition to interview questions, participants were asked to complete a sociodemographic survey before the start of the focus group to gather information about their experience, expertise, agency, and perception of community needs. Archival data and secondary data analysis were used to develop an inventory of UNLV's existing capacity to engage nonprofits and to catalog some of the existing collaborations.

Procedures

Focus groups for community participants and UNLV faculty were held separately but within a month's timeframe. Community participants were asked to participate in 90-minute focus group sessions with other community providers. Likewise, UNLV faculty and staff were asked to participate in 90-minute focus group session with fellow faculty members. Five one-on-one interviews were conducted with faculty members who were unable to attend the faculty focus group.

After agreeing to participate in the focus groups, all participants were provided with informed consent forms via email and again on the date of the focus groups and interviews. Participants were asked to sign informed consent forms prior to the start of the focus group or interviews. Participants were given an opportunity on the day of the focus group/interview to decline participation at any time. During the focus group, the purpose of the study, ground rules, and confidentiality were explained. Participants were asked not to mention the names of community members or agencies to prevent a breach of confidentiality. Participants were provided with a complete list of the interview questions for their use during the focus groups. Participants completed and returned demographic forms about their agencies or themselves and their interview questions with written notes to the researcher at the end of the focus group sessions. All participants were instructed not to write their names or other identifying information on their surveys or interview questionnaires.   All focus groups and one-on-one interviews were recorded for the accuracy of dissemination of the results.
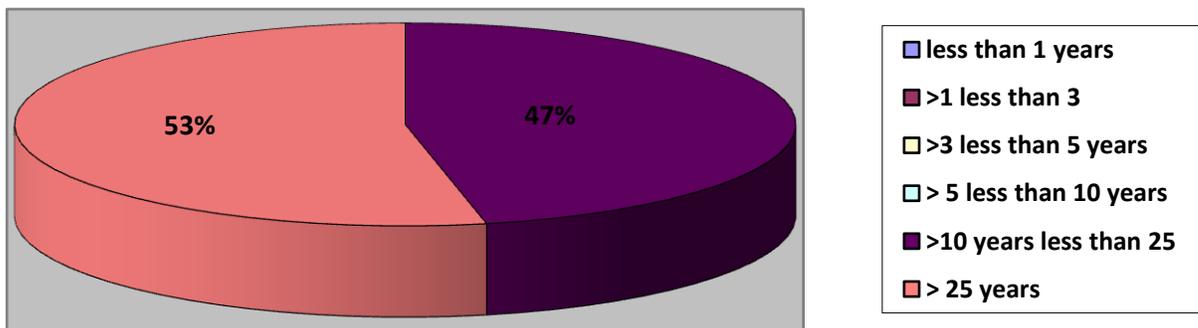
Chapter 5: Findings

Community Participants

Description of Agencies and Participants

Twenty-four community leaders representing 23 agencies and organizations participated in community-based focus groups. Although all 24 participants contributed to the discussions during the focus group interviews, the sociodemographic findings described here account for only 15 participants. Figures 1–8 depict the sociodemographic backgrounds of the participants and the characteristics of the agencies or organizations they represent.

Years of operation. The participants represented agencies that have a sustained record of operation. The majority (53%) of the participants' agencies have been operating in Clark County for more than 25 years. Many (47%) of the agencies have been providing services in the local community for more than 10 years. This group of participants did not contain any agencies whose length of service has been less than 10 years.

Figure 1.   Years of agency existence

Legend:
- less than 1 years
- >1 less than 3
- >3 less than 5 years
- > 5 less than 10 years
- >10 years less than 25
- > 25 years

Type of agency. All of the community participants in the focus groups represented private nonprofits. Although the sample did not comprise any public nonprofits, many of the agencies indicated that they have existing partnerships and contracts with public nonprofits.

Figure 2. Type of Agency
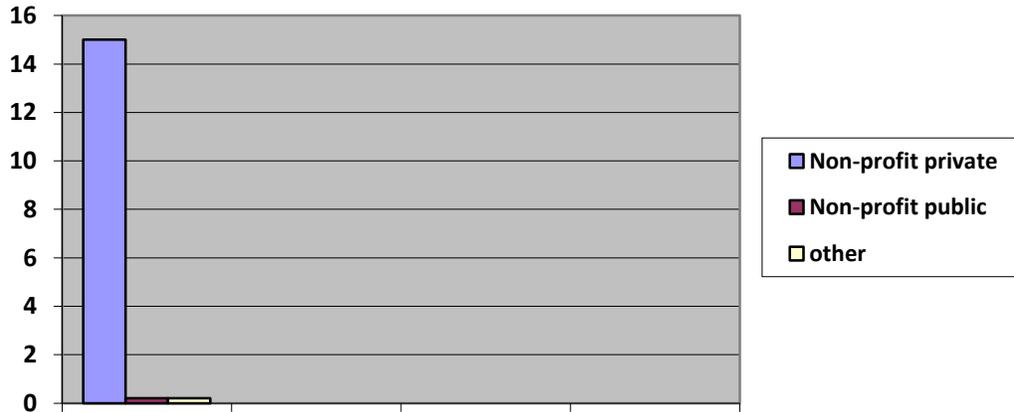
Administrative/managerial experience of the respondents. Several of the participants reported a significant number of years of experience as administrators or managers of nonprofit agencies. Thirty percent (30%) of those participants who responded to this question reported at least 7 years of managerial or administrative experience. Slightly more than 30% of the respondents have been serving in an administrative or managerial capacity for 3 or fewer years. Finally, slightly less than 30% of the participants have more than 7 years of administrative experience.

**Figure 3. Length of Managerial Capacity**
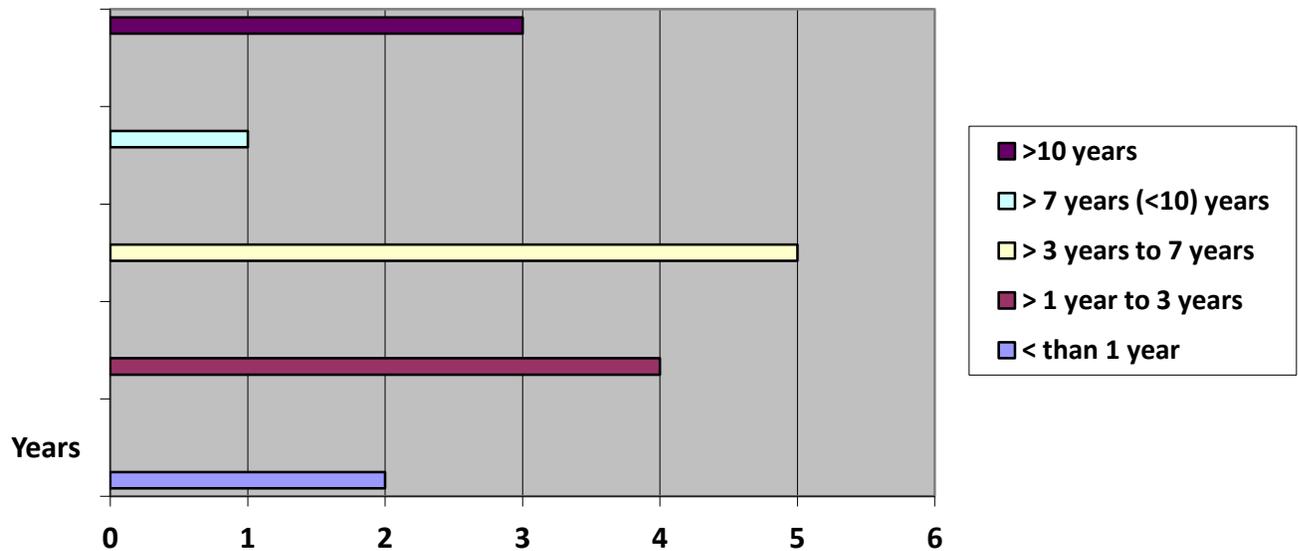
Types of services provided. A wide range of services are provided by the nonprofit agencies and organizations who participated in the study. The category referred to as "other" comprises 21% of the services provided by the nonprofits. The category "other" includes such services as financial services, tax preparation, bankruptcy counseling, assets development, foreclosure, debt repayment, IRS repayment program, family resource center, entrepreneurial training and loans, advocacy, job training, rental assistance, utility assistance, and thrift store and meals. Also noteworthy were the number of agencies and organizations that reported shelter care (13%) and emergency services (13%) as some of their largest service categories.

Figure 4. Types of Services
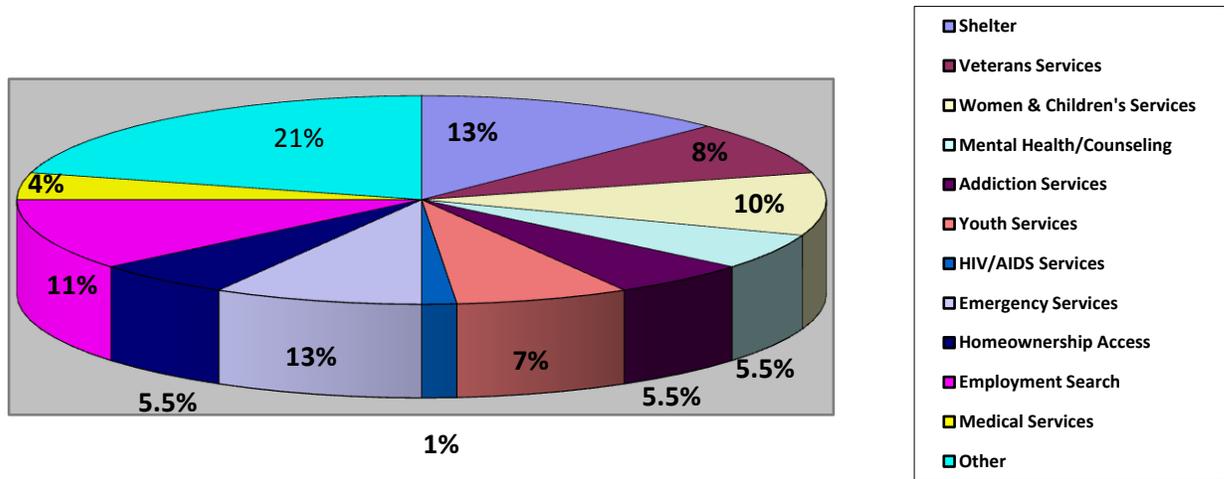
Number of people served annually. Of the participants who responded in this category, more than half serve approximately 1,000–10,000 people annually. About one fourth of the participants reported serving more than 10,000 people annually.

Figure 5. Number of People Served Annually (in thousands)
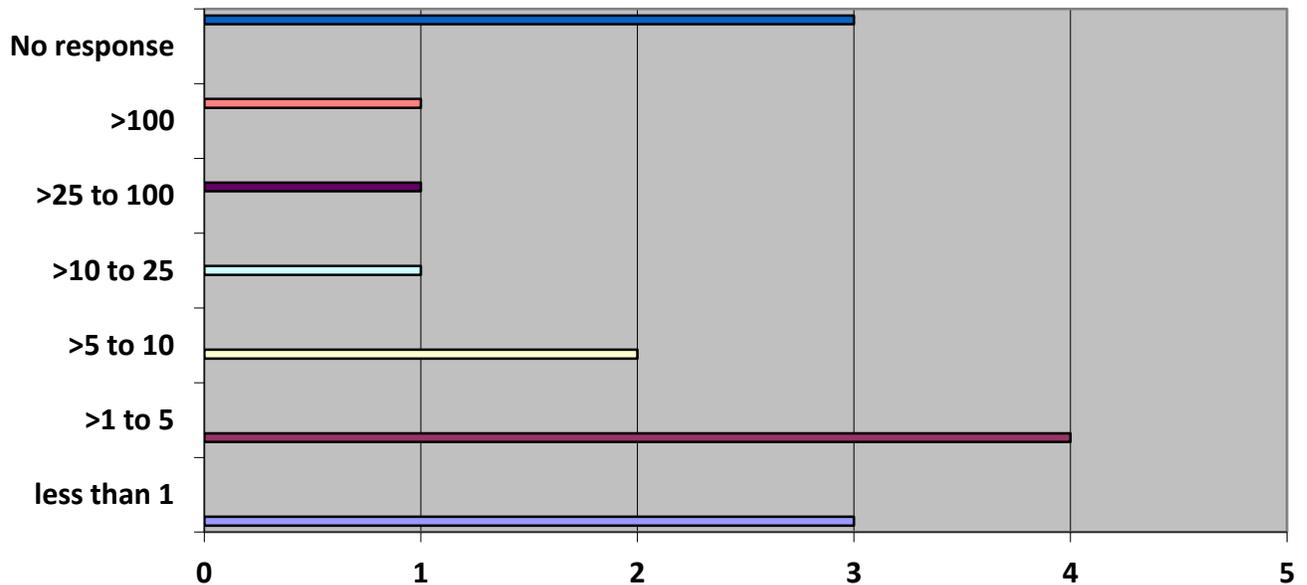
   Total number of staff. There was quite a bit of variance in the number of staff employed by the agencies or organizations. Divided into fifths, the staff composition is as follows: 10 staff or fewer, 11–25 staff, 26–50 staff, 51–100 staff, and more than 100 staff members.
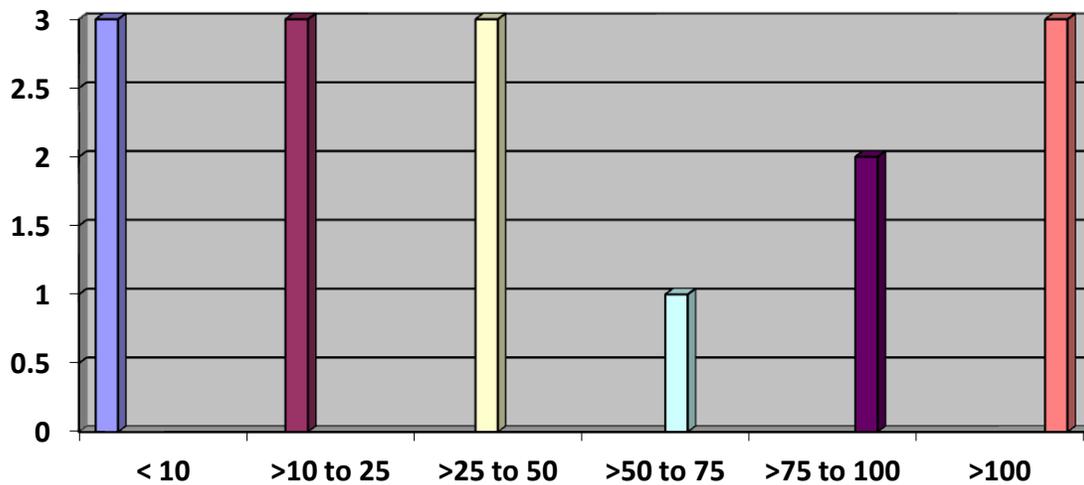
Figure 6. Number of Staff Employed

Table 1. Additional Services

Are there services that are not being provided that your agency would like to provide in the future?

Yes	80%
No	14%
No Answer	6%

Table 2. Collaboration

Are you currently collaborating with other agencies?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Existing Resources and Fiscal Leveraging

Funding sources. The largest funding source for the agencies represented in the focus groups was private grant funds (37%), and federal grants (24%) was the second highest funding category. The category referred to as "other" (15%), which comprises fundraising and small donations, was nearly the same as the state grant funding source (20%). Finally, very few agencies identified client fees (4%) as one of their top funding sources.

Figure 7. Top Funding Sources
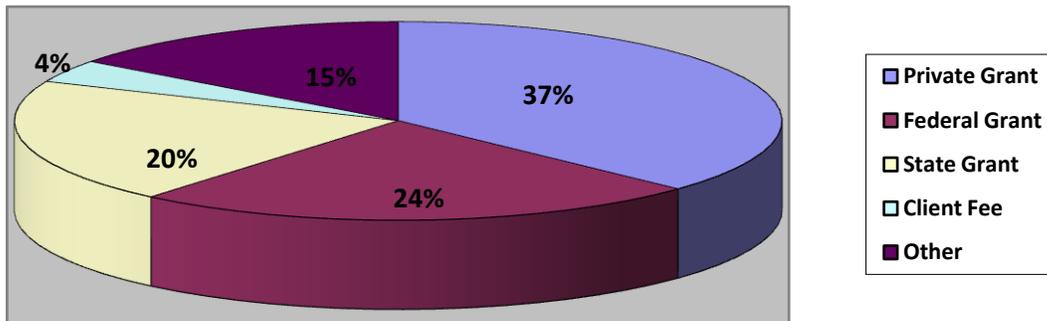
Fiscal operating capacity. The vast majority of the participants reported having an annual operating budget of more than $1 million. Only four of the participants have operating budgets that are less than $1 million and no agency reported having an operating budget less than $250,000.

Figure 8. Annual Operating Budget (in the thousands)
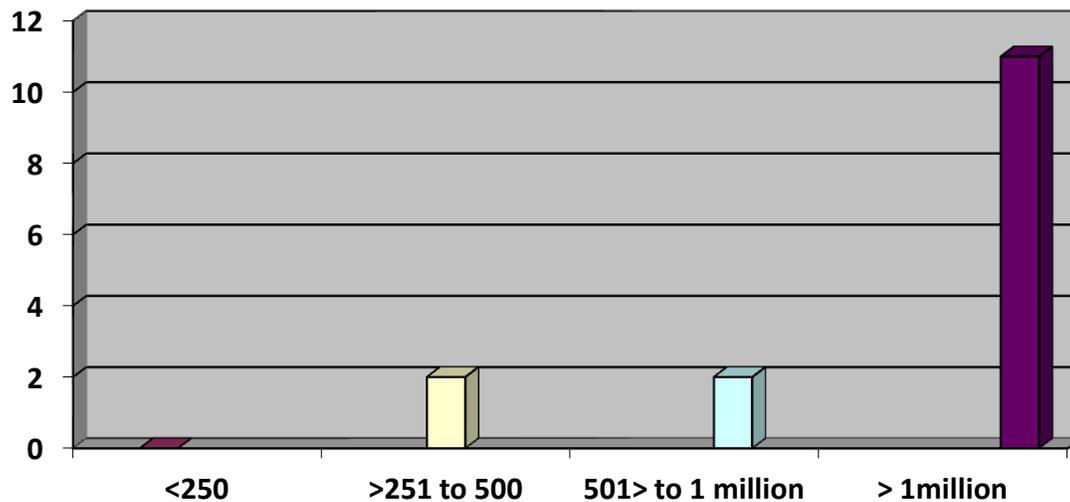
Community Participants' Perception of the Need
for Capacity Building and Engagement

The participants were engaged in discussions about their perceptions of partnerships between local nonprofits and the university. A significant amount of qualitative data was obtained and was organized into data themes as depicted in Table 3. The data are organized by the questions posed to the participants and ranked by the most salient discoveries.

Most Pressing Issues

In addition to the issue of housing sustainability, the community leaders expressed the concern that the lack of self-sufficiency and the erosion of middle-class status are two of the most pressing issues that their clients face. The participants portrayed a picture in which many southern Nevada residents are without stable income, educational preparation, and marketable employment skills and background. These conditions are met with a weakened social service infrastructure in which many safety net programs are operating with a decreased funding level. One participant conveyed the situation as follows:

> *"The people we serve are one paycheck away from being homeless, many are living on the edge. When you mix this with family issues and personal problems unbearable stress is produced."*

Moreover, many of the respondents remarked about the psycho-social-emotional functioning of the clients that they served and observed that many of them are challenged to secure stable housing because of disabilities, lack of education, addictions, and mental health conditions.

Most Significant Agency Challenges

After learning more about how the nonprofit leaders frame the challenges, the focus groups and interview sessions shifted to a discussion of the most significant challenges that agencies face as they try to address the identified needs of their clients. Three of the most salient issues to emerge included the need for unrestricted funding, the need for workforce development of nonprofits, and the need for resource building, gathering, and convening of shared interest groups. The participants expressed concern about the fact that previous funding is no longer available, which has forced them to cut operating costs, defer maintenance at facilities, or limit staffing. It was reported that government funding is restricted and that many clients are in need of services and resources that are not allowed by the government funding source from which the nonprofit operates. One participant summarized the findings in this category this way:

> *"There is a misunderstanding of what it takes to operate a nonprofit. There is a need for donor awareness. Even after reassessing our priorities and shifting our operating approach where essentially fewer staff are doing more work we still find that more people need help than what we can provide. There has been a big shift in donor-based funds and if clients don't fall into strict parameters then we can't provide assistance."*

Ideal UNLV-Community Partnership

The respondents indicated that they have been attempting to increase their level of partnerships and collaborations with other entities, including other nonprofits. Additionally, they expressed a desire to partner with UNLV. One participant stated:

> *"Why doesn't UNLV want to reach out to nonprofits in the community?*
> *No nonprofit would say no to help for a university. We have increased*
> *needs and decreased funding. It would be such an amazing positive*
> *in our community."*

Several examples of desired partnerships were offered but there was a resounding preference for nontraditional types of collaborations. For example, the respondents indicated that they would like to work with students and faculty in business, computer science, and communication. They expressed a desire to host student internships or service-learning projects in which faculty and students could gain hands-on experiences by providing assistance with such things as marketing, public relations, information technology, planning, building, and investing. The respondents shared several ideas about potential partnerships but warned that there seems to be a lack of coordination, communication, and centralization of contact with respect to forging partnerships with the university.

Two additional themes emerged from this particular category of discussion. The nonprofit leaders expressed a desire for partnerships between the university and the community that focus on applying for national or federal funding. Also, the participants emphasized that community building goes far beyond just funding and making financial investments. They indicated that university and community partnerships can be about the giving of time, skills, and talents.

Previous UNLV-Community Collaborations

The participants shared multiple examples of sustained partnerships that they have had with the university. Internships with professional degree programs were most typically the example of previous and existing partnerships that the university has with the community. Additionally, collaborations that involve research projects were discussed. For the most part, the participants recollected positive experiences with respect to hosting faculty research projects or supervising student practicum and internship experiences. However, there was a strong sentiment that the nature, quality, and approach to UNLV-community partnerships should change. It was discovered that the nonprofits desire more contact with faculty. They indicated that most of the engagement that occurs involves student-centered activities. Also, they felt that the service activities and engagement can be improved by increasing supervision of projects.

Collaboration Challenges

The participants identified challenges that they felt should be addressed in order to improve university-community collaborations. A significant amount of conversation ensued in this category but the focus of the discussion is perhaps best captured in the notion of the need to

balance "community needs with learning needs." The respondents conveyed a level of sensitivity by the university to provide both students and faculty with applied experience and learning opportunities. However, they shared that many nonprofits make a huge sacrifice and investment in student and faculty projects because they are not often equipped or set up to manage them. They called for an increased level of sensitivity on the part of everyone involved and an appreciation of the fact that in order to get the agencies' needs met and to provide a quality engagement experience for faculty and students, both sides must work harder to understand each other's goals.

Table 3. Outline of Key Themes – Community Participants (Nonprofits)

	Most Pressing Issues	*Most Significant Agency Challenges*	*Ideal UNLV-Community Partnership*	*Previous UNLV-Community Collaborations*	*Collaboration Challenges*
Primary Theme	Housing sustainability	Need for unrestricted funding	There are various potential partnerships but there is a lack of coordination and centralization	Internships with professional degree programs: nursing, social work, counseling, dental hygiene, public health	Interns can be a drain on small nonprofits due to investment of time, and resources and the fact that there is no compensation for their training
Secondary Theme	Self-sufficiency and erosion of middle-class status	Workforce development for nonprofits	Partnerships should focus on applying for national and federal sources of funding	Research and needs assessments and data supports	There is no organized and centralized point of contact and relatedly, the quality of the collaboration will depend on who you know
Tertiary Theme	Compromised psycho-social-emotional functioning	Resource building, gathering, and convening of shared interest groups	Community building that goes beyond funding investments and instead focuses on the giving of time, skills, and talents	Collaborations have been student-centered (but they need to be more faculty-centered), collaborations are with health and human services (but nonprofits also need help with management, business, information technology) collaborations have been short term and unsupervised (but they need sustainability and oversight)	Fine balance between community needs and learning needs

UNLV Participants' Perception of the Need
for Capacity Building and Engagement

University Participants' Skills, Abilities and Capacity-Building Background

Figure 9. Length of Employment at UNLV
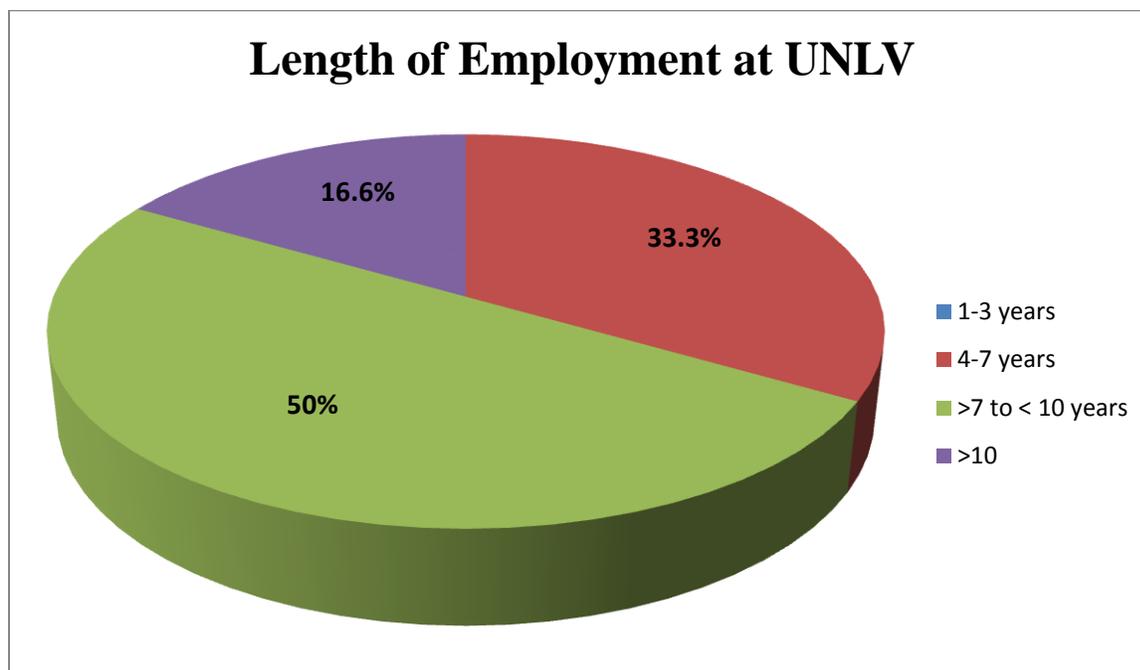
Half of the campus participants have been employed with the university for 7-10 years.   Slightly more than 30% have been employed with the university for 4-7 years. Nearly 15% of the UNLV focus group participants have been employed with the university for more than 10 years.

Figure 10. Length of Residency
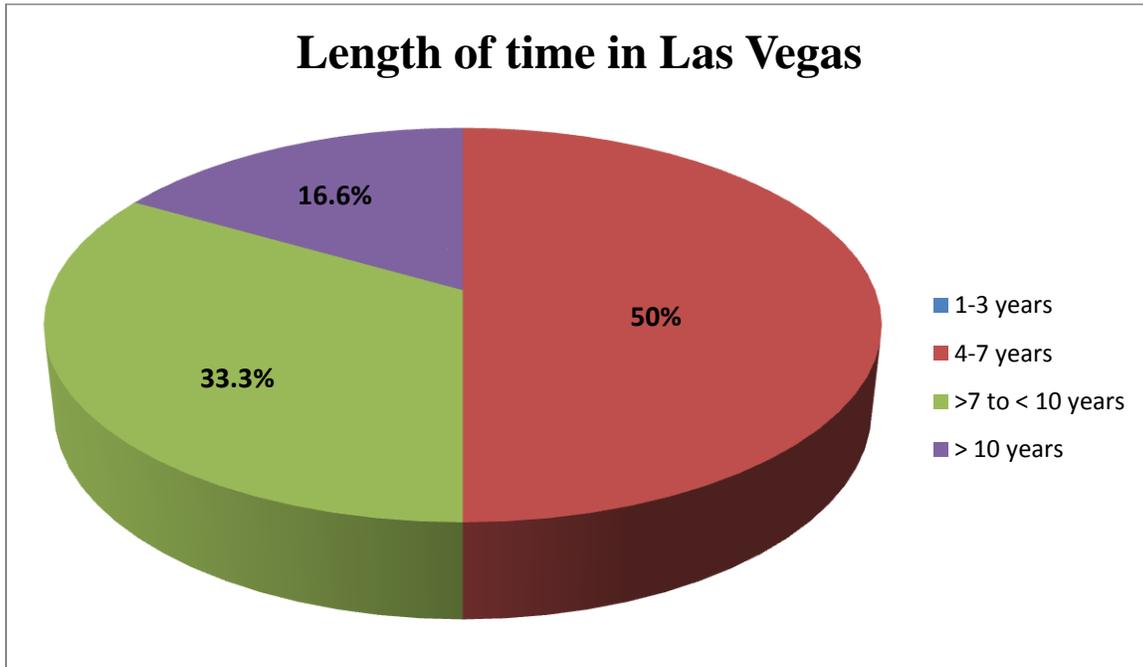
The UNLV focus group participants' length of residency in Las Vegas parallels their years of employment with the university.

Figure 11. Representation of UNLV Units
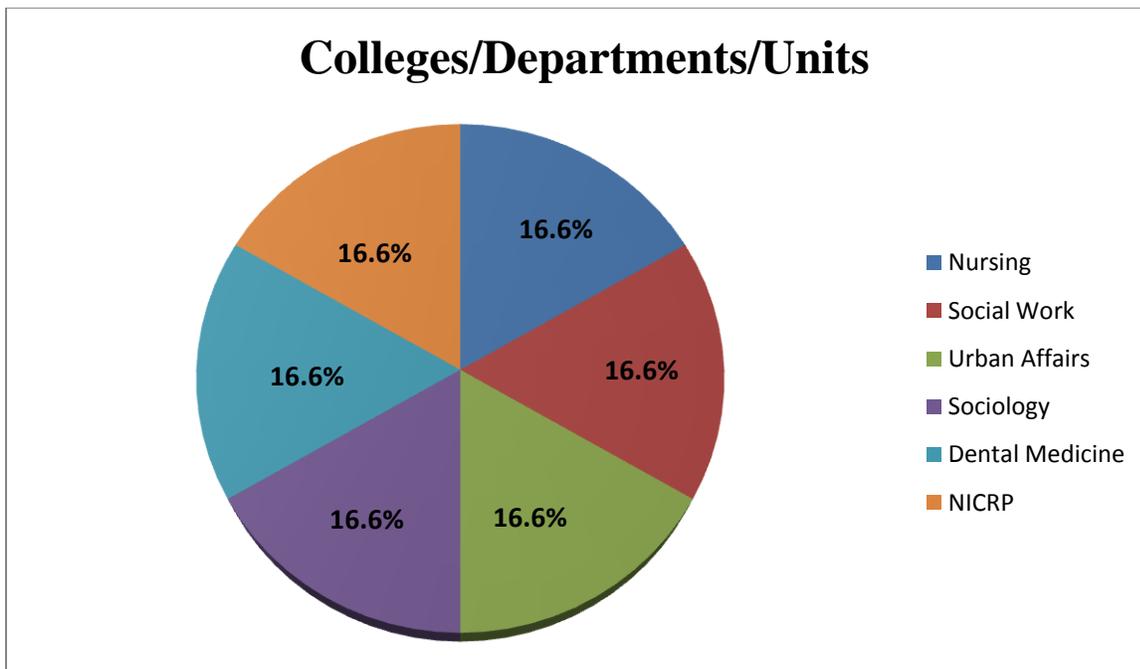
Representation from UNLV units/department was equal.

Figure 12. UNLV Participants' Academic Background
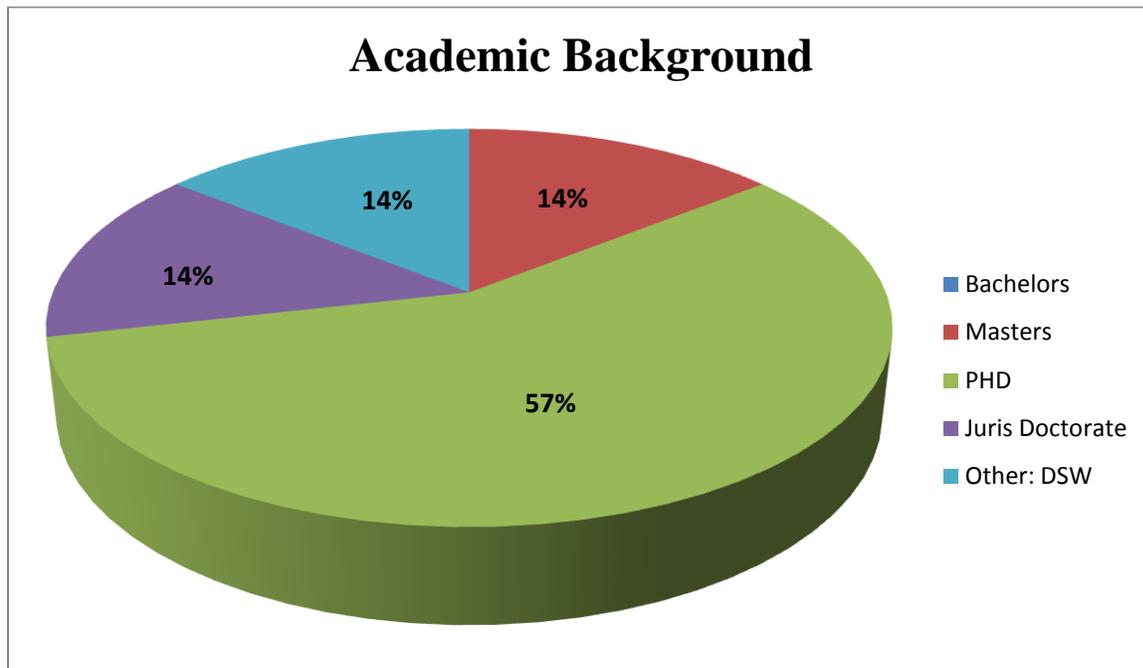
Fifty-seven percent of the UNLV faculty members and staff who participated in the focus groups hold a Ph.D. and 14% hold both a juris doctorate and Ph.D. Fourteen-percent of the participants have a masters degree and another 14% hold a bachelors degree.

Figure 6. UNLV Participants' Role in Current Collaborations
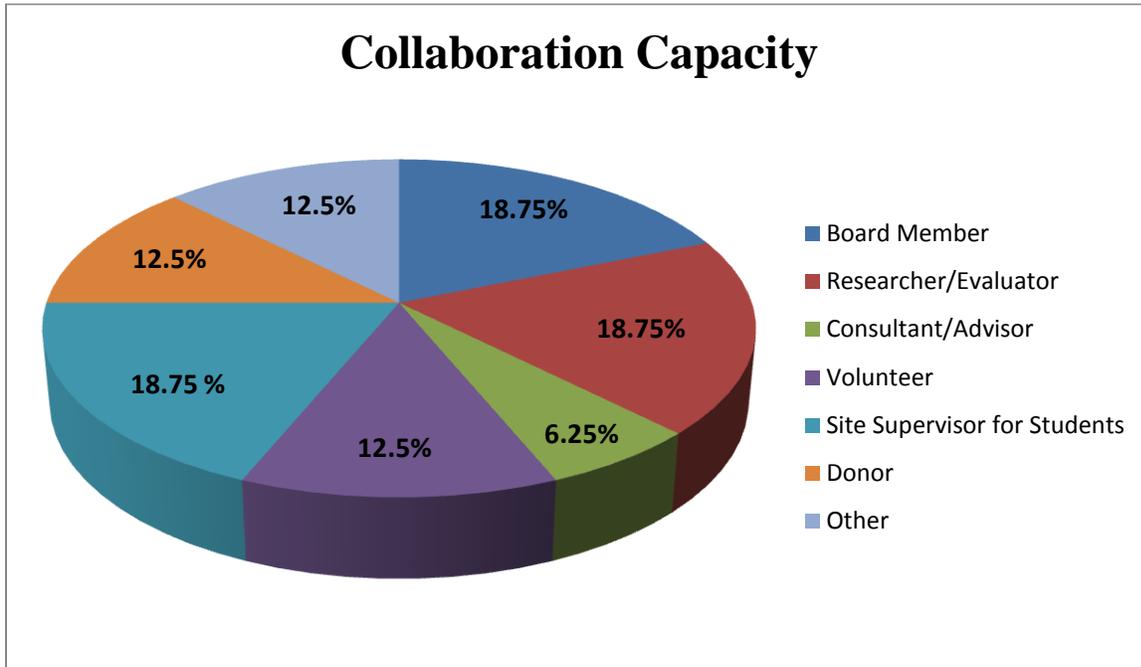
Eighty-three percent of faculty members reported that they are currently collaborating with a community-based organization. The faculty collaboration is highly concentrated in the areas of board member, researcher/evaluator and site supervisor for practicum students. Additional areas of collaboration include volunteer work, donor and the "other" category, which includes the following: grant writing and pro-bono for local non-profits.

NOTE: One-on-one interviews were completed with an additional 5 UNLV faculty and staff. The sociodemographic characteristics of the individuals who completed one-one-one interviews mirror that of the focus group participants with the following exceptions: all of the participants held a Ph.D., 3 were from the College of Education, and 2 were from Urban Affairs.

UNLV Faculty/Staff Participants' Perception of the Need for Capacity Building and Engagement

Most Pressing Issues

The university participants identified several issues affecting the local community, but the three most salient issues included a frail social service system, recognition of the "new poor" (i.e., individuals who were once middle-class and who had not experienced generations of cyclical poverty), and restricted access to services. The participants felt that many of today's challenges are predicated by the lack of education and the unskilled nature of the local workforce. Additionally, they felt that "Nevada's shaken infrastructure" further compromises an underdeveloped and under-resourced health and human services system.

Engagement and Perceptions of Need

The university participants were asked what their potential role might be in relation to engaging the community around the pressing issues that were identified. The participants felt that the university could engage the community in three major ways. First, the issue of conducting research and writing grants for funding emerged. Second, the respondents felt that given the fact that many nonprofits are limited in their ability to expand services and increase their workforce; the university could serve as a "stop gap" measure by providing a voluntary workforce in the form of student interns and practicum experiences. Third, the university participants felt that a role for the campus community might be that of advocacy in which they could assist nonprofits by raising community awareness about critical issues.

Ideal UNLV-Community Partnership

The university faculty and staff thought that partnerships between the campus and the community are highly desired but that in order to make them successful they must go beyond student engagement and involve concentrated efforts on the part of the faculty. However, they felt that the university should start by trying to better understand the needs of the local community and by coordinating all of its efforts through one centralized office of engagement. Two respondents captured the findings in this category as follows:

> *"We need to have a better understanding of what each*
> *discipline at UNLV can offer to community agencies and what*
> *services they provide. There is always a community divide but*
> *it is the job of the university to demonstrate what value*
> *they add to the community."*

> *"As an institution of higher learning, we have an opportunity*
> *to collect data. As we move toward service learning or internships*
> *and practicum experiences, measuring the impact of the university*
> *on the local economy would be interesting. Some agencies would*
> *not function without our students. It's not whether the university*
> *should increase partnerships but rather what*
> *impact do partnerships have."*

Previous UNLV-Community Collaborations

In this category the university participants described previous and existing university-community partnerships as being largely driven by the need for the university to provide students with applied learning experiences. The respondents indicated that in many cases, partnerships that go beyond the placement of students in learning experience fail and even student internships can be fraught with difficulties. The university participants said that faculty engagement with nonprofits is not low because of a lack of interest; rather, there are a host of barriers within the university that derail the process. One participant expressed the following:

"The role of the faculty member is primarily to do research
(scholarly contributions). Service is always considered
as less important. Many faculty do not step outside of
the university for this reason. If it does not directly relate to
them getting tenure and promotion, then it's not a priority."

Hindrances and Supports for Nonprofit Engagement

The internal capacity issues of the university were cited as conditions that limit faculty engagement with the community. The participants conveyed a desire to "fix the internal issues" as one strategy for the university to become more effective with local nonprofit agencies. Methods and strategies that might increase the quality and frequency of engagement between the university and the communities included the establishment of an office with designated staff that would work to facilitate communication and establish formal, organized, and supervised partnerships.

Table 4. Outline of key themes – UNLV Faculty Participants

	Most Pressing Issues	*Engagement and Perceptions of Need*	*Ideal UNLV-Community Partnership*	*Previous UNLV-Community Collaborations*	*Hindrances and Supports for Nonprofit Engagement*
Primary Theme	Frail social service infrastructure has suffered tremendously during a climate of recession and economic strife	Surveys, research, grant writing, and needs assessments	UNLV should partner with agencies to be their data clearinghouse in support of their pursuits of funding	Placement of student interns from health, urban affairs, and education programs	Community nonprofits and UNLV faculty do not know about one another. There is a need for a university-based and centralized point of engagement
Secondary Theme	There is a lack of community response to the needs of the "new poor" (i.e., individuals who were previously securely in the ranks of the middle class)	Many agencies have no to very little capacity for expanding services. We have provided "stop-gap" measures by providing a volunteer workforce	UNLV needs to work harder to understand the local community needs. There should be the creation of a research center that features a catalog of community services that the university can provide, research that helps with programming, and a gateway to UNLV (accessibility)	Partnerships that go beyond placement of students tend to fail. There are multiple internal barriers to faculty collaborating with the local community. Many faculty are engaged in projects outside of the local community	UNLV's engagement with local nonprofits has not been quantified. There is a need to measure the effect on the local community
Tertiary Theme	Citizens face crippling rules about program eligibility, and access to services is a tremendous problem	Advocacy involving assistance with letter writing, bill drafts, and community awareness about critical issues	Ideal partnerships go beyond student help and involve the use of faculty. For junior faculty, internal barriers must be removed in order to facilitate their work with the community	Many local agencies are not set up to accommodate student interns. Placement of students can backfire when students are seen as a burden or they do not receive a quality learning experience	Deans and administrators do not value engagement with the community and local nonprofits. This work is not rewarded. Engagement can be detrimental to a faculty person because it distracts him/her from research

Chapter 6: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Assessing the Fit: Community Need and UNLV Capacity

Most Pressing Issues

The community and UNLV faculty and staff participants share many parallel thoughts and perceptions about the most pressing issues facing the local community as it relates to housing, economic self-sufficiency, and shelter care. One of the central themes upon which the data from the community and university participants coalesce is the perception that there is an increasing number of Clark County residents who are in need of assistance and who at one time enjoyed a solid middle-class income and lifestyle. One community participant expressed this finding in the following manner:

> *"We have come across several situations involving people who once donated to our agency but are now in need of assistance themselves."*

The Needs of Nonprofits

One of the most resounding themes to emerge from the data concerning the needs of nonprofit agencies is the perception held by community participants that they are limited in what they can do to meet the needs of the community due to a lack of unrestricted funding. Participants expressed frustration with the fact that they operate largely within funding parameters that designate specific target populations or areas of services. For example, some of the agencies who work in debt counseling or housing assistance programs indicated that much of the funding that is made available for their agencies to operate derive from "hardest hit" funding and as such, there is strict eligibility criteria about who can receive services. A significant number of community residents fall outside of the agencies' eligibility or funding criteria and as a result they are unable to receive services. A point of overlap found between the community and university participants

Points of Agreement about Community Needs

One of the most pressing issues is the rising numbers of Clark County residents who once securely existed in the middle-income tier but are now in need of assistance

The workforce currently in place to address the identified community needs is underdeveloped and functioning under capacity

was the notion that many of the identified community needs are unaddressed because the nonprofit workforce is operating under capacity and is not fully developed and equipped to address the most prevailing problems.

Ideal UNLV-Community Partnership

The UNLV participants expressed the belief that an ideal community partnership would involve faculty and students serving in a capacity that included research and/or collaborative research projects that lead to the development of data warehousing. Conversely, community participants expressed a view of collaboration that focused on faculty committing their time, skills, and talents to agencies in support of agency-identified needs. Nonetheless, the two groups of participants expressed an overwhelming degree of agreement around two issues that they believe must be included in any type of university-community partnership. First, in both types of focus groups, the sentiment that an ideal partnership must be coordinated, centralized, and orchestrated from one point of contact within the university structure emerged. The community participants stated that successful partnerships will hinge upon the university becoming more accessible. Second, both groups of participants shared in the call for a collaborative model of engagement that focuses on the acquisition of federal funding and the development of grant applications.

Previous or Existing Collaborations

The data obtained from both the university and community participants indicated that most of the existing collaborations involve the use of student interns or practicum students. There are widespread field placements of health, urban affairs, education, nursing, social work, counseling, and dental hygiene students at local community nonprofits. Both groups indicated the pros and cons associated with the use of student interns at nonprofit agencies. From the faculty vantage point there was the belief that nonprofit agencies provide invaluable training for students and students are able to fill many of the workforce gaps that exist with local agencies. However, the university representatives felt that many local agencies are not set up to accommodate student interns. Placement of students can backfire when students are seen as a burden and as a result the quality of the training they receive is not adequate. Likewise, although community participants expressed a high value and regard for existing

Features of an Ideal University-Community Partnership

Accessibility

Gateway communication

Centralization

Coordination

Faculty-involved (not just student-driven)

Cross-discipline

Continuity

collaborations, there was a resounding cautionary theme that emanated from the data. Several participants stated that the type of assistance provided by the university is often not what a nonprofit needs most. For example, the respondents expressed a need for assistance with such nontraditional supports as event management, organization of financial systems, website building, marketing, fundraising, and reprographics.

Community participants conveyed a sense that many of the partnerships between the university and the community are one-sided. One respondent expressed the sentiment as follows:

> *"Both sides are not benefitting from the relationship. When a student or professor needs something from an agency, they call. But when an agency needs something, that's a different story. You only get calls one-way. There is no central point of contact. It's hit or miss or it's who you know."*

In summary, one of the central themes that emerged when participants were asked to reflect on previous or existing university and community partnerships is the need for consistent and nontraditional types of engagement. One participant reflected on a partnership that the nonprofit agency had with the School of Architecture. The quote reads:

> *"The School of Architecture worked with us to research area demographics when our surrounding population began to change. Now that's thinking outside the box. Who would ever have expected something like that from the School of Architecture? The work was excellent."*

The theme associated with the need for consistency in partnerships is indicative in the following quote:

> *"The Englestad Scholarship Program is a good model that the whole university should be using. They have a volunteer component. The students' terms last longer than one semester which allows*

> ## *Existing University-Community Collaborations*
>
> *University-community collaborations have been student-centered (but they need to be faculty-centered), collaborations largely offer health and human service supports (but nonprofits also need help with business, management, communication, and information technology issues), and collaborations are often short-term and unsupervised (but they need sustainability and oversight)*

> *time for training. The students are socially- and community-oriented because they are local students and marginalized. This is reinvesting back into the community and assistance with staffing needs. More of this type of program would be very beneficial.*

Collaboration Challenges

The university faculty and staff participants expressed an overwhelming degree of support for engaging with local nonprofits to help increase their capacity to better service the community. However, the university participants expressed a concern that they are very limited in both the nature and frequency of their involvement with the community due to what they perceived as internal barriers. Specifically, the respondents felt that community engagement is not valued or rewarded in the university setting. In fact, several university participants indicated that such engagement can be detrimental to faculty (especially junior faculty) because it is time consuming and does not "count" with respect to promotion and tenure. The community participants identified the lack of a centralized university office that directs and organizes engagement, service, and community collaborations as one of the biggest barriers to engagement. Despite these barriers, both groups of respondents reported that there is a tremendous amount of potential and positive outcomes that can be garnered through more planned, organized, and sustained partnerships.

Recommendations: A
Campus-Community Collaborative

A set of recommendations is offered to address some of the findings revealed in this study. The recommendations emanate from an analysis of the results obtained in all three parts of the study. Also, based on an analysis of best practices and campus-community collaborations in other states, the recommendations described in Table 5 below are an attempt to provide a beginning point for forging a partnership concentrated in the area of housing, homelessness, economic development, and interventions with vulnerable populations.

Table 5. Recommendations for Community Engagement and Capacity Building

<div>

Engagement and Nonprofit Capacity Building

Several critical areas of overlap exist between the needs expressed by representatives from local nonprofits and the capacity, expertise, and interest of university faculty and staff. In order to facility and expand engagement activities, the following recommendations are offered:

Establish a centralized point of contact for the coordination and organization of community-university partnerships.

Fund a staff position to serve as designated coordinator of community engagement and collaboration.

Pilot an engagement project using the service focus discussed herein as the theme for organizing interested groups of faculty, staff, and students to work on targeted projects.

Develop a marketing and communication plan to be used to engage community and university participants.

Leverage and combine multiple funding sources to provide infrastructure support to engage and sustain faculty and student involvement in community engagement projects.

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APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FORM
FOR COMMUNITY PROVIDERS AND CHARITIES**

Housing, Shelter Care, and Homelessness:
Strengthening the Community through Planned Collaboration

Sociodemographic Questionnaire
Community Participant

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM

Please complete the following brief questionnaire about your agency. Check the category that best describes your agency or your experience with your agency. A few questions may require you to rank the categories provided or provide short written answers.

1. How long has your agency been in existence?

   a) Less than 1 year   _____

   b) >1 to 3 years   _____

   c) >3 to 5 years   _____

   d) >5 to 10 years   _____

   e) >10 to 25 years   _____

   f) More than 25 years   _____

2. What category best describes your agency?

   a) Nonprofit/private   _____

   b) For-profit/public   _____

   c) For-profit/private   _____

   d) Government Agency   _____

   e) Other: _____   _____

3. Please identify your agency's top 3 funding source by numbering the categories below from 1 to 3.

   a) Private grant   _____

   b) Federal grant   _____

   c) State grant   _____

   d) Client fee   _____

   e) Other: _____   _____

4. How long have you served in an administrative/managerial capacity with your agency?

   a) Less than 1 year   _____

   b) >1 to 3 years   _____

   c) >3 to 7 years   _____

   d) More than 7 years   _____

      (<10)

   e) More than 10 years   _____

5. Are there services that are currently ***NOT*** provided by your agency that you would like to provide in the future?

   No   _____   Yes   _____

   Please elaborate:

   _____

   _____

If yes, are any of these services in the start-up phase?

No   _____   Yes   _____

6. What types of services are provided through your agency?

a) Shelter   _____

b) Veteran services   _____

c) Women and children   _____
    services

d) Mental Health/   _____
    Counseling

e) Addiction Services   _____

f) Youth services   _____

g) HIV/AIDS services   _____

h) Emergency services   _____

i) Home ownership/access   _____

j) Employment search   _____

k) Medical care/services   _____

l) Other: _____   _____

m) Other: _____   _____

n) Other: _____   _____

o) Other: _____   _____

p) Other: _____   _____

7. How many people do you serve annually?

_____

8. How many staff members do you employ?

a) < 10   _____

b) >10 to 25   _____

c) >25 to 50   _____

d) >50 to 75   _____

e) >75 to 100   _____

f) > 100   _____

9. What is your annual operating budget?

a) < 250,000   _____

b) 251,000 to 500,000   _____

c) 501,000 to 1,000,000   _____

g) > 1,000,000   _____

10. Are you currently collaborating with other community-based organizations, groups or agencies?

    No   _____   Yes   _____

    If yes, please give examples (i.e., name) of these collaborations:

    _____

    _____

    _____

**APPENDIX B: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC
FORM FOR UNLV FACULTY AND STAFF**

Housing, Shelter Care, and Homelessness:
Strengthening the Community through Planned Collaboration

Sociodemographic Questionnaire

UNLV Faculty/Staff Version

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM

1.   How long have you been employed at UNLV?

a)   1 – 3 years   _____

b)   4 – 7 years   _____

c)   More than 7 years   _____
        (<10)
d)   More than 10 years   _____

2.   How long have you lived in Las Vegas?

a)   1 – 3 years   _____

b)   4 – 7 years   _____
c)   More than 7 years   _____
        (<10)

d)   More than 10 years   _____

3.   In what college, institute/center, or department are you employed?

_____

4.   What is your academic background (i.e., degree and field of study)?

Highest degree _____   Academic field _____

5.   Are you currently collaborating with community-based organizations, groups, agencies or efforts that are working to address any of the following issues: homelessness, shelter care, economic development, housing, self-sufficiency, food security, education and workforce development, mental health support, child care, exploitation of women or children, or health care (particularly for vulnerable groups).

No   _____   Yes   _____

If yes, please give examples (i.e., name) of these community efforts:

_____

_____

6.   In what capacity are you assisting (please check all that apply)

Board member   _____

Researcher or evaluator   _____

Consultant or advisor   _____

Volunteer   _____

Site supervisor for student internships,   _____
practicum placement, or service learning
projects

Donor   _____

Other _____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Housing, Shelter Care and Homelessness:
Strengthening the Community through Planned Collaboration**

**PHONE OR IN-PERSON
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

UNLV Faculty/Staff Version

NOTE: ***This is the same interview protocol to be used in the focus groups. The only difference is that a participant will be given the option of a private interview as opposed to a group format.***

General Probe #1:

What do you believe to be some of the most pressing issues that we face locally pertaining to issues of homelessness, shelter care, housing, and economic development?

General Probe #2

Have you engaged local homelessness, shelter care, economic development, or housing organizations/agencies? If so, what was the nature of that work? What was achieved? How were students involved? Was your work done as a "service" activity, "sponsored project," or a non-UNLV activity?

NOTE: Please respond without providing individuals' names (agency names are okay).

General Probe #3

What would be an ideal UNLV-community partnership? In other words, what role do you see for UNLV faculty, staff, and students in helping the local community to build their capacity to better meet the needs of their clients?

(continued)

General Probe #4

Have you attempted a partnership with a local agency but experienced limited success? If so, please elaborate.

NOTE: Please respond without providing individuals' names (agency name okay).

General Probe #5

What supports and what distracts from your ability to lend your expertise (e.g., research, consultation, training, planning) to local homelessness, shelter care, and housing organizations/agencies in your role/capacity as a UNLV faculty/staff?

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Housing, Shelter Care and Homelessness:

Strengthening the Community through Planned Collaboration

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Community Participant Version

General Probe #1:

What are some of the most pressing issues that your clients face?

General Probe #2

Given your clients' needs, what are the most significant challenges that your agency/organization encounters?

General Probe #3

What would be an ideal UNLV-community partnership? In other words, what role do you see for UNLV faculty (teachers and researchers) and students in helping you to build your capacity and better meet the needs of your clients?

General Probe #4

Has your agency/organization worked with UNLV researchers or students in the past? If so, what was the nature of that work? What was achieved?

NOTE: Please respond without providing individuals' names.

General Probe #5

Have you attempted a partnership with the university but failed? If so, please elaborate.

NOTE: Please respond without providing individuals' names.