

The Cambridge Nonprofit Summit II

A facilitated exchange of ideas for Executive Directors

October 2, 2013

Nearly 40 executive representatives of the Cambridge nonprofit community joined together on October 2, 2013 to participate in a facilitated process of developing an action plan for the future of a nonprofit coalition in Cambridge. This event built off the work of the first Cambridge Nonprofit Summit, during which the nonprofit community agreed to collaborate for the benefit of Cambridge residents.

The Cambridge Nonprofit Summits are possible thanks to generous support from Cambridge Community Foundation.

Coalition Progress

Since the first meeting on June 11, 2013, members of the Cambridge nonprofit community have worked together to make progress in several areas:

- **Community Benefits Process:** Conversations between nonprofit leaders and City Council members have led to an agreement that nonprofit representatives will be involved in the process of determining a fair and reasonable community benefits process to distribute development funds in Cambridge.
- **Out of School Time:** Nonprofit representatives have gathered to voice their stake in the debate around extended school days in Cambridge, and will continue to be an influential part of this discussion.
- **Best Practice Research:** A working group formed at the first Nonprofit Summit has begun collecting resources around best practices for nonprofit coalitions and community benefits agreements. This research will be available to the broader group.

Dreaming Big

The group began by detailing characteristics that would make a successful Cambridge coalition of nonprofits. Major themes are summarized as follows:

Cambridge nonprofits will partner with one another and other sectors to align services with best practice research and needs assessments of the community, paired with an asset-based approach that shares resources and values transparency and inclusion.

Assessing Reality

After brainstorming characteristics of an ideal coalition, the group assessed factors that impact the feasibility of accomplishing those goals, including:

- **Strengths:** An amazing group of talented people who are open to collaboration, representation of diverse services and constituents, and a long history of dedication to the community.
- **Challenges:** Competition for finite resources, limited capacity, politics, and tension between individual organizations' missions and the coalition's goals.
- **Opportunities:** Learning from one another, using collective impact to create change, and working together to harvest resources in nonprofit, private and public sectors.

Shared Commitments

Understanding the ultimate goals and limitations of the landscape, participants of the Cambridge Nonprofit Summit II narrowed in on several central commitments that will guide future work:

Collaboration: The group is invested in learning to understand its members and the whole sector in order to facilitate mutual respect, celebrate diverse inclusion, and ultimately be open and willing to work together and with other sectors.

Strategy for Success: The group will embark on a strategic planning process that lays out a clear, thoughtful leadership structure, values equitable access, and approaches the work with a focus on results.

Strengthening the Sector: Nonprofits will leverage their common experiences, share ideas, and help one another to make a more vibrant nonprofit sector in Cambridge

Serving Cambridge: At the center of the group's work will be a focus on healing the City of Cambridge and its people by deeply understanding needs and assets, and making sure residents have access to the services they need.

Key Actions

In order to achieve the commitments listed above, a series of working groups will meet to carry out specific aspects of the work. Groups include:

Organizational Structure: This working group will create a mission, vision and infrastructure for the nonprofit coalition, and will develop a strategic plan for the coalition's work.

Government Relations: The Government Relations group will design a thoughtful process for cultivating the political system in Cambridge for the betterment of nonprofit organizations and their constituents.

Advocacy and Issues: This responsive group will address pressing needs that arise in the community and keep agencies informed of advocacy opportunities that could be relevant to them.

Communication, Marketing & Networking: By developing the brand that conveys the coalition's mission, this group will create a communications and marketing strategy to share information with stakeholders.

Resource Development & Research: Members of this committee will commission a needs assessment and asset map, collect information about nonprofit programs and services, and compile data into a format that serves the coalition.

About the Summit

The Cambridge Nonprofit Summits arose from the conversations of ten nonprofit executives who value the possibilities of nonprofit collaboration.

The organizations included in this planning include:

Agassiz Baldwin Community
Cambridge Community Center
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee
Community Art Center
Community Legal Services & Counseling Center

East End House
Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House
Transition House
Tutoring Plus of Cambridge
YWCA Cambridge

Appendix

Summit Overview

The second Cambridge Nonprofit Summit was held on October 2, 2013 at MIT. Executives from many of the City's nonprofit organizations contributed to this strategic networking and planning session for the work of a fledgling coalition of area nonprofits. The meeting was facilitated by Nancy Jackson, Principal of Gammy Bird Consulting. Jackson led the session using Technologies of Participation¹ methods for developing an action plan.

Participating Organizations

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| Agassiz Baldwin Community | Cambridge Historical Society | Friends of CRLS |
| Beyond the 4th Wall | Cambridge School Volunteers | Homeless Empowerment Project/Spare Change |
| Boston Area Rape Crisis Center | CASPAR, Inc. | Homeowner's Rehab |
| Boys and Girls Club of Middlesex County | Central Square Theater | Just-A-Start Corporation |
| Cambridge Camping Association | Community Art Center | Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House |
| Cambridge Center for Adult Education | Community Dispute Settlement Center | MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound |
| Cambridge Children and Family Services | Community Legal Services and Counseling Center | Parents Forum |
| Cambridge Community Center | Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association | Phillips Brooks House Association |
| Cambridge Community Foundation | East End House | Possible Project |
| Cambridge Community Television | First Parish Church | Shelter Legal Services Foundation |
| Cambridge Family and Children's Service | Food for Free Committee | Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services |
| | | Young People's Project |

Also in Attendance as Observers

David Maher
Cambridge City Council
Penny Peters
Assistant to the Mayor of Cambridge
Susan Richards
Cambridge Agenda for Children

Nancy Tauber
Cambridge Kids Council
Minka VanBeuzekom
Cambridge City Council

Note of Thanks

The Cambridge Nonprofit Summits are funded through continued support from Cambridge Community Foundation.

¹ Technologies of Participation (ToP) are group facilitation methods, developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (www.ica-usa.org), that have wide applicability and consist of methods that enable groups to (1) engage in thoughtful and productive conversations, (2) develop common ground for working together, and (3) build effective short and long-range plans. ToP teaches team members how to collaborate on projects and teaches group facilitators how to effectively lead their teams.