



## **Colorado Nonprofit Association** **Year in Review**

### **Introduction**

The Colorado Nonprofit Association demonstrated significant momentum and achieved many goals on behalf of the sector in 2006. We moved into our 20<sup>th</sup> year redoubling our efforts to build our core competencies in the areas of membership, advocacy and communications, educational programs, public policy, community relations, resource development, and organizational infrastructure – allowing us to better serve the sector. There were many firsts in 2006, including publication of an annual report, initiation of the Leadership Luncheon Series, and hosting an anniversary gala.

### **Membership**

We believe that there is strength in unity and that our leadership in promoting collaboration across the sector is critical to the well-being of nonprofit organizations and the state. Together, nonprofits create a powerful force for change in our communities and for the people of Colorado. Each new member of the Colorado Nonprofit Association amplifies our increasingly persuasive voice when we represent the sector.

Association membership at the beginning of 2006 was 1,150. Increased outreach and improved communications with current and prospective members helped push membership to more than 1,200 by December 31. Business membership, starting at 76 in January 2006, increased 68 percent by year end. The number of group purchasing partners also grew in 2006. By the end of the year, we were providing cost savings to our members through contracts with Nonprofit Resources, Office Depot, First Data, Reality Background Checks, Ready Talk Audio and Web Conferencing, and Mountain States Employers Council.

We bolstered the Association's communication plan in order to help members realize greater savings, gain timely access to vital information, and avoid any lapse in service. The membership retention process now begins as soon as an organization or an individual joins the Association. This ongoing process is designed to create long-term "win-win" relationships.

The first communication a member receives from the Association is a "welcome packet." The packet includes all the information new members need to get the most from their annual membership. Throughout the year members receive correspondence notifying them of professional development courses, leadership programs and opportunities to improve their efficiency in day-to-day operations. The Association's bimonthly newsletter, *Nonprofit Colorado*, contains information necessary to run a nonprofit organization and recaps recent events in the sector. Over the course of a year, member individuals and organizations will receive dozens of messages, both hardcopy and electronic, promoting Association-supported events.

To reinforce the benefits of membership, we send members at renewal time a complete list of benefits, along with a blank roster sheet on which they can update contact information for their key staff. This helps us target our communication efforts, and also lets members indicate areas of interest for future programs. Our goal is to help members strengthen their organizations to the fullest extent by encouraging them to utilize all of the benefits to which they are entitled.

### **Advocacy & Communications**

In 2006 the Colorado Nonprofit Association took a lead educational role in explaining new legislation and how it affects nonprofits statewide. We held two immigration forums in the Denver metro area and several town halls around the state. We produced a DVD of the first immigration forum and made it available at nominal cost to all interested nonprofits.



### **Web Site**

The Association's web site became a better utilized communications tool in 2006. Taking the advice of the Marketing and Communications Committee, we streamlined pages and edited text to create easier access to information, registration and referrals. The web site averaged more than 2,800 hits a day. The average visitor accounted for approximately 24 hits per session, resulting in a site-wide total of 8,957 page views a day. The Nonprofit Job Board remains the most popular feature on the site, receiving 13,000 visits per week.

Some 2,722 jobs were posted to the Nonprofit Job Board over the course of the year. Of these, 568 were posted by nonmembers, accounting for \$19,880 in revenue to the Association. Recent improvements to the online Nonprofit Events Calendar have made it an even better resource for member and nonmember organizations alike. A total of 351 events were posted in 2006, including a growing number of postings from nonmembers, generating a small but growing revenue stream.

### **Educational Programs**

Committed to improving the quality of programming and not duplicating services, the Association implemented new efforts in 2006 to better serve the sector. Overall, we reached our goals of providing advanced levels of programming, giving nonprofit leaders new opportunities for dialogue and information exchange, and increasing education opportunities for those outside of metro Denver.

#### **Leadership Luncheons**

The Association's new Leadership Luncheon program brought nonprofit executives and other leaders together to initiate sector-wide discussions of crucial issues. Speakers such as Lester Salamon, Tom Adams, Ricardo Millett, and Peter Brinckerhoff came to Colorado to share their knowledge of various key issues in the nonprofit sector. The luncheons proved to be unparalleled educational opportunities for nonprofit executives. The program was structured to encourage dialogue on the topics and to propel positive organizational change and enhance options for collaboration. Our first two luncheons drew an average of 200 participants; since then we have been selling out at approximately 260 attendees.

#### **Educational Workshops**

This year we offered a total of 49 educational workshops, utilizing a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote our educational programming to a wider pool of nonprofit staff and volunteers. We saw a 6 percent increase in the number of workshop participants in 2006, despite the addition of the Leadership Luncheon Series. In an effort to better respond to the needs of the sector, we are comparing our current programming against that of other state associations, and we are critically examining feedback about our programming as well as developing new methods of assessing the needs of the sector, including ways to survey those who are *not* attending our programs.

#### **Training Collaborative**

In 2006 the Association launched a collaborative program, still in its beginning stages, with Metro Volunteers and the Community Resource Center to design and produce a coordinated schedule of educational programs offered by all three organizations. This gives each member of the collaborative the opportunity to increase promotion and provide a wider array of training opportunities to the sector, and to clearly identify educational niches that it serves. The first training guide was distributed via email in mid-January and was very well received.

#### **Fall Conference, Denver**

The Colorado Nonprofit Association held its 2006 Annual Fall Conference & Exhibition in Denver on October 6. We received many expressions of appreciation from attendees for providing this conference. We provided training sessions aimed at veteran nonprofit employees as well as those new to the sector, and a good number of organizations brought board members and volunteer leaders to the conference.



We achieved a 90 percent return on evaluations handed out in the sessions, thanks largely to the dedication of our volunteer room moderators. Of the 28 sessions offered, 95 percent were given an overall rating of 4 (out of 5) or higher. Attendees generally believed the sessions were led by knowledgeable presenters, were informative and diverse, and imparted valuable material that would prove useful in their jobs. The feedback from exhibitors was excellent; they were happy and felt the conference was well worth their investment. The new exhibit hall layout provided continuous traffic to each booth. The attendees felt the exhibit hall provided them with a good mix of vendors this year, and they enjoyed the prize giveaway at the end of the trade show.

### **Western Region Conference, Grand Junction**

The Association's Western Region Conference was introduced in 2004 in Grand Junction under the title "Spring Conference." We changed the name to "Western Region Conference & Exhibition" to emphasize that the conference was tailored to the specific needs of nonprofits in the western Colorado region. In 2006 we expanded the reach of this conference beyond Mesa County: attendees included 25 organizations from outside the Mesa County area.

Held on April 20 and 21, the two-day conference offered training sessions aimed at veteran nonprofit employees as well as those new to the sector. As with the Fall Conference, a good number of organizations brought board members and volunteer leaders. Our inclusion of higher-level discussions was appreciated.

Both attendees and exhibitors were pleased with this conference and felt that it met or exceeded their expectations. Of the 20 sessions offered, 90 percent were given an overall rating of 4 (out of 5) or higher. And as with the Fall Conference, attendees generally believed the sessions were led by knowledgeable presenters, were informative and diverse, and would prove useful in their jobs.

### **Colorado Nonprofit Week 2006**

*Colorado Nonprofit Week* is a time to honor, praise and publicize the broad impact of nonprofits' work in Colorado. It is a time to thank all the board members and the thousands of volunteers and dedicated staff who work so hard year-round to make a positive difference. The week begins with an honorary proclamation from the Governor and continues with celebratory events around the state. This year a publicity photo was taken of the Governor signing the proclamation in the presence of representatives from Arc of Arapahoe/Douglas County, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and the American Red Cross, Mile High Chapter, along with two children representing the children of Colorado.

The weeklong celebration included exhibits at the State Capitol by some of our member organizations. Many organizations throughout the state celebrated Colorado Nonprofit Week with events of their own.

### **Awards Luncheon 2006**

Colorado Nonprofit Week closed with our celebratory awards luncheon on Friday, March 10, at the Adam's Mark Denver Hotel. Members of the nonprofit community and state legislators came together to celebrate the vital contributions nonprofits make to our communities. Guest speakers Gigi Dennis (Secretary of State) and Hank Brown (University of Colorado President) were followed by award presentations. Some 868 people attended the luncheon, solidifying its status as the premiere networking event for Colorado's nonprofit sector. The luncheon drew 13 event sponsors in addition to 11 corporate and 41 nonprofit table sponsors.

In recognition of their unwavering dedication to their respective organizations and communities, the following persons received awards: Sen. Alice Madden, 2005 Legislator of the Year; former Sen. Norma Anderson, 2006 Public Service Lifetime Achievement Award; and Dr. Gary VanderArk and Mrs. Earlene Wolfers, William Funk Award for Building Community.



## **Gala**

2006 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Colorado Nonprofit Association. In celebration of the occasion, the Association hosted its first-ever gala event, a wonderful opportunity to highlight the most significant developments in the history of Colorado's nonprofit sector and celebrate the remarkable partnerships forged between the state's business and nonprofit communities.

Over 650 gala attendees were treated to a video presentation, featuring icons of Colorado's nonprofit world talking about significant events in the history of the sector. Guests also received a commemorative program and the inaugural edition of the *Denver Business Journal's Giving Guide*.

## **Public Policy**

### **Policy Work on Behalf of the Sector**

In 2006 the Colorado Nonprofit Association worked to advance public policies that protect and strengthen the ability of nonprofits to secure funding for their operations and programs. During the regular legislative session, the Association worked with various nonprofits and business associations to ensure that the General Assembly would allocate money to K-12 schools, higher education, and health care in accordance with Referendum C. The Association worked to exempt nonprofits from HCR 06-1010, which, had it passed, would have subjected nonprofits to the same fundraising limits as candidate committees.

Besides working with various legislators on bills of interest, the Association strengthened relationships with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General and provided advice for the annual *Charitable Solicitations Report* press conference.

The Association also helped lobby Colorado's U.S. senators to oppose repeal of the estate tax, which would have resulted in the loss of billions in charitable bequests nationwide, and provided training and guidance to state nonprofit associations opposing "TABOR-like" tax and expenditure limits.

### **Legislative Support on Behalf of the Sector**

In 2007, we will continue working on two issues that emerged in the 2006 election season.

First, the Association opposed Amendment 41 on the November ballot because the "Standards of Conduct" section (now Article XXIX) would place in the state constitution unreasonable limits on the ability of nonprofits to inform elected officials and government employees. In the wake of the amendment's passage, the Association will continue to work with policymakers and key stakeholders to ensure that the impacts of Article XXIX on nonprofit advocacy, as well as other unintended consequences, are addressed.

Second, the General Assembly passed several bills addressing immigration issues. In addition to requiring additional steps by employers and independent contractors to verify the lawful presence of employees, the General Assembly passed HB 06-1023, requiring state agencies and political subdivisions to verify the lawful presence of adults applying for certain public benefits. The Attorney General has interpreted the measure to allow these government entities to require that nonprofits with contracts to provide certain public benefits carry out these verification requirements. The Association worked with various organizations to host two educational forums on 1023 in 2006, and is continuing to work with a coalition of nonprofits to address the negative impacts of 1023 on nonprofits.

## **Help Desk**

In 2006 the Help Desk was improved by streamlining internal processes and eliminating inefficiencies. The Nonprofit Start-Up Packet is now available on the web site as a free download, eliminating wait time for users seeking that information and freeing up time for Help Desk staff to work on other queries. In 2006 the Help Desk



responded to 587 questions – fewer than last year primarily because the Help Desk is no longer tracking requests for Nonprofit Start-Up Packets. The Help Desk continues to publish a Frequently Asked Questions column in *Nonprofit Colorado*.

### **Organizational Infrastructure**

2006 brought some internal changes to the Association that improve efficiency in reporting and operations. The addition to the staff of a Director of Finance & Operations led to the in-house production of monthly accounting financial statements, which were previously outsourced; this should result in timelier reports, easier access to data, and improved accuracy.

In addition, we have made several improvements to our web site. Although the look of the site remains the same, the changes should increase the processing speed and help make the site more user-friendly. Of course, web site development is an area that demands constant development; thus we began in 2006 developing enhancements that will be implemented in 2007, including a “Members Only” section, a résumé-posting feature in the Job Board area, and an improved Events Calendar.

The expansion and remodeling of the Association offices, financed by a generous grant from the Boettcher Foundation, was completed in 2006. To top off the endeavor we embarked on a project to create a wall display honoring the winners of the William Funk Award for Building Community. By the end of the year we had developed a design concept and collected photos of most award winners. The official unveiling of the William Funk Wall is scheduled for March 2007.

### **Income Diversification**

To meet strategic goals and to show substantive results for Association members and the sector, the Board of Directors has determined that the Association needs to diversify its funding base. In 2006 we focused our efforts on increasing (1) earned income, (2) membership revenues (by adding and retaining members) and (3) corporate grants to support the general operations of the organization. We were successful in securing all funds required to meet the 2006 budget. Approximately \$65,000 of those revenues will roll over to the 2007 budget as funds restricted for the Colorado Generosity Project.