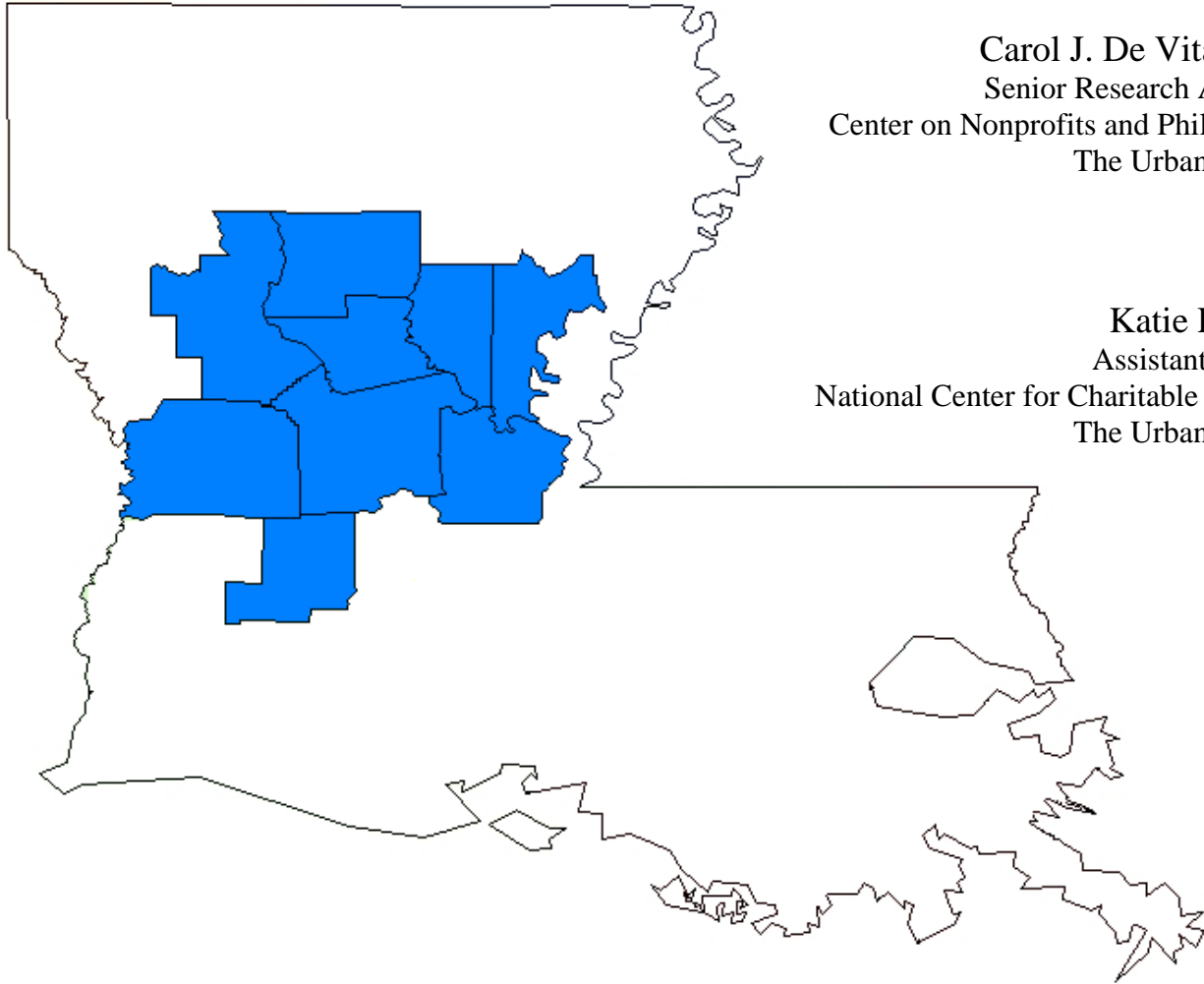


A PROFILE OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN CENTRAL LOUISIANA

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 THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION



Community Development Works
Helping People Build Communities in Central Louisiana

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The Rapides Foundation is a philanthropic organization that develops initiatives and provides grants to organizations throughout a nine-parish service area that share the Foundation's mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana. The Foundation's service area consists of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to The Rapides Foundation and its trustees.

A Profile of Nonprofit Organizations in Central Louisiana

Every day, nonprofits in Central Louisiana make a difference in someone's life. They provide an array of services, foster civic participation, and help strengthen and enrich communities. Nonprofits are also an economic force in the region, providing jobs, purchasing commodities, and selling their products and services. Despite these contributions toward building civil society in local areas, most people have only a vague idea of the number and types of nonprofits found in their communities or the amount of financial resources needed to support and sustain this work.

This report, commissioned by Community Development Works, a program of The Rapides Foundation, is a comprehensive study of Central Louisiana's nonprofit sector. It gives residents and community leaders the tools for understanding the basic size, scope, and financial dimensions of the sector, the extent to which nonprofits and faith-based organizations collaborate with one another, and a framework for understanding the challenges and issues facing the nonprofit sector.

The study was guided by six questions:

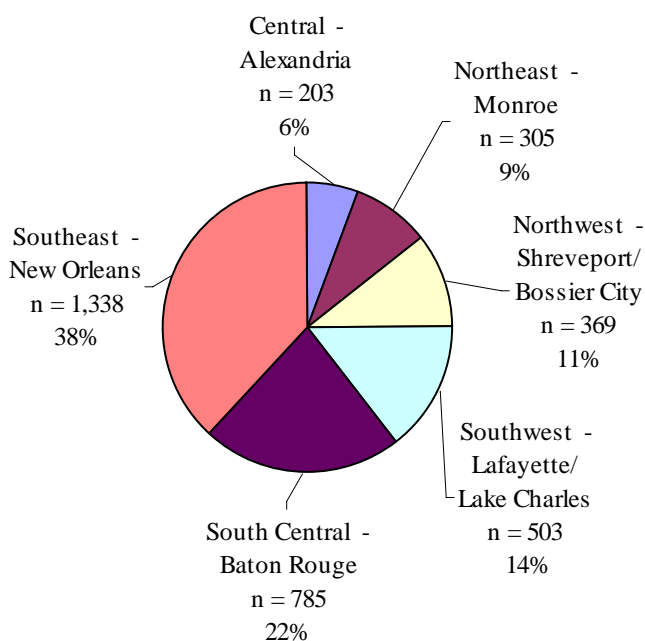
- What is the overall size and scope of Central Louisiana's nonprofit sector, and how does this compare with other regions in the state?
- How are nonprofit resources distributed in Central Louisiana, and does this vary by type of service provided (e.g., health care, education, human services, etc.), location, and access to financial support?
- How well are nonprofit financial resources in Central Louisiana managed—for example, how much is spent on management and administrative costs, and are nonprofits ending the year with a positive operating budget?
- How often do nonprofits and faith-based organizations in Central Louisiana work with one another?
- What challenges do nonprofit and faith-based leaders in Central Louisiana see as critical to their ability to build capacity and provide needed services that will enhance the quality of life in the region?
- What are the strengths and distinctive features of Central Louisiana's nonprofit charitable sector?

Data for the study are from a survey of 244 randomly selected nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Central Louisiana that responded to a telephone survey conducted by Louisiana State University between November 2008 and January 2009. Financial data for nonprofits in Central Louisiana and other parts of the state are from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) at the Urban Institute. These data are based on the Forms 990 that nonprofits filed with the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) for the year 2006. Because of lags in data processing, 2006 data provide the most complete records for analysis.

Central Louisiana has the smallest nonprofit sector in the state.

- Central Louisiana has the fewest number of nonprofits that are registered and file an annual financial Form 990 with the IRS—203 organizations, or 6 percent of all registered and filing nonprofits in the state.
- It has the smallest amount of revenues—\$383 million, or 3 percent of all nonprofit revenue in the state.
- And, it has the fewest financial assets—\$627 million in assets, or 4 percent of all assets in the state.

Number and Percent of Nonprofit Organizations in Louisiana by Region, 2006



Nonprofit Financial Resources in Louisiana by Region, 2006

Region	Region's largest city	Total Revenue		Total End-of-Year Assets	
		Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Central	Alexandria	\$383,263,641	3%	\$626,671,910	4%
Northeast	Monroe	606,165,990	5	1,047,941,951	6
Northwest	Shreveport/Bossier City	1,319,411,259	11	1,817,477,859	11
Southwest	Lafayette/Lake Charles	1,021,642,765	9	1,507,514,312	9
South					
Central	Baton Rouge	2,030,401,362	18	3,997,514,366	23
Southeast	New Orleans	6,171,015,764	54	8,066,428,364	47
State of Louisiana		\$11,531,900,781	100%	\$17,063,548,762	100%

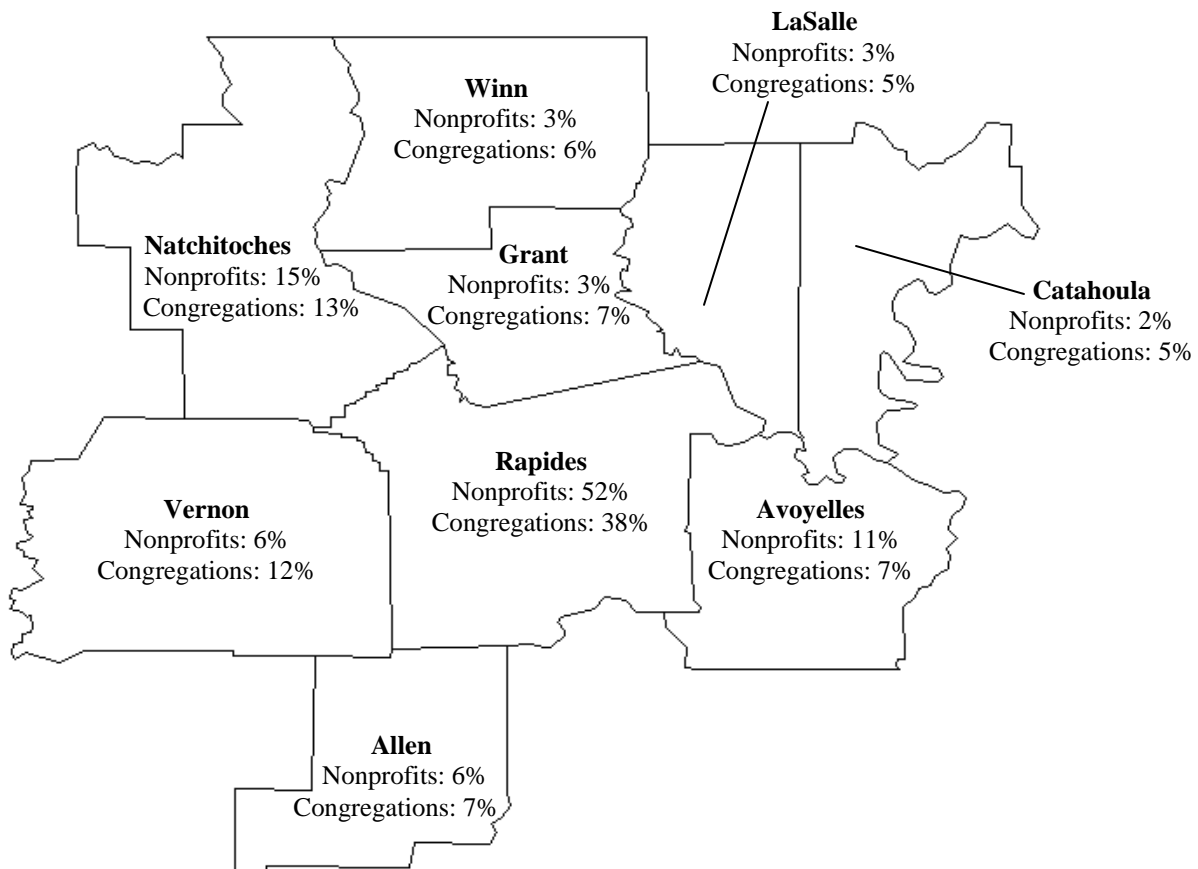
Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.

Note: Data are based on nonprofits that file a Form 990 with the IRS.

Most community-based organizations in Central Louisiana are concentrated in Rapides Parish.

- Religious congregations and secular nonprofits are a core part of the service delivery system in Central Louisiana. They also promote civic engagement among local residents.
- There are 764 religious congregations and 743 nonprofits in Central Louisiana. These nonprofits are all registered with the IRS, but not all of them file the annual Form 990. Congregations and nonprofits are both heavily concentrated in Rapides Parish.
- In addition, there are 472 grassroots nonprofits (not registered with the IRS) in the region, many of which have no permanent address.
- Many nonprofits headquartered in Rapides are reaching residents in other parishes through satellite offices and mobile units.

Percent of Nonprofits and Religious Congregations in Central Louisiana by Parish

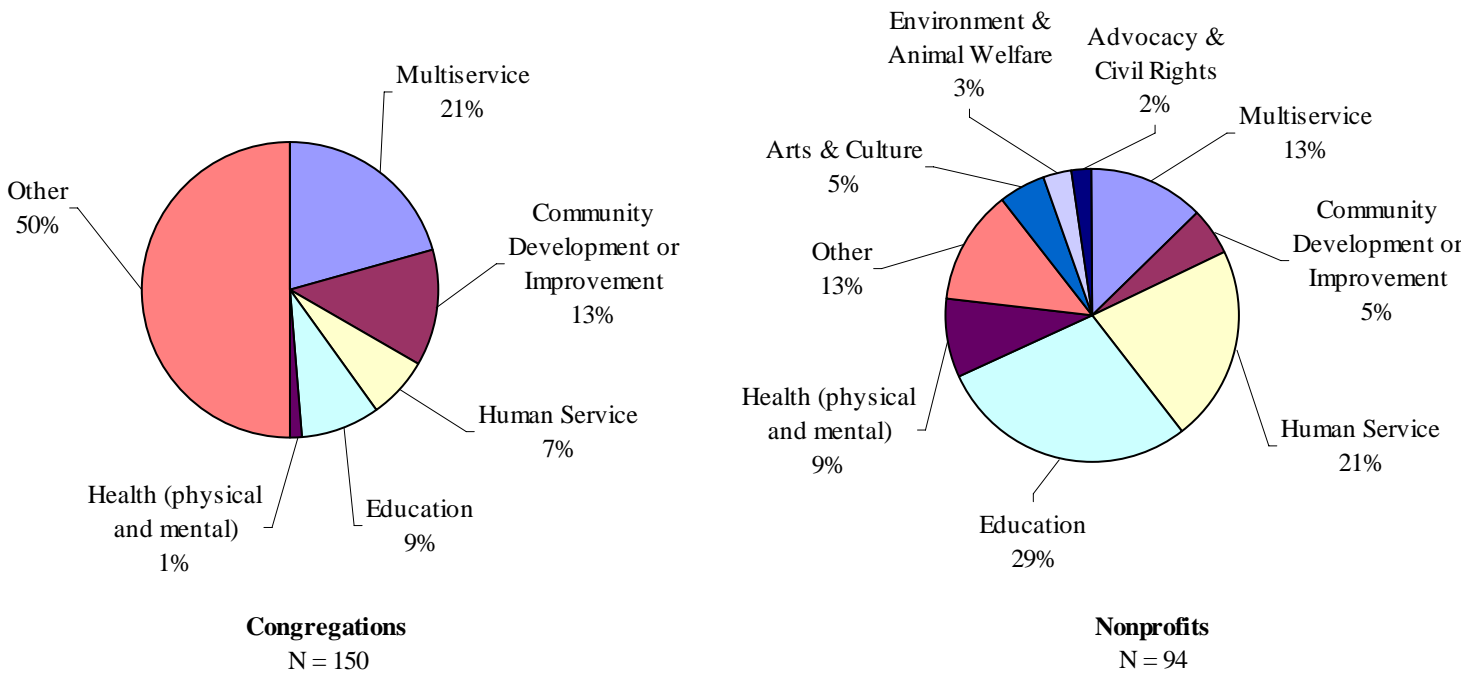


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Six respondents did not provide information on the location of their main office. Data are based on registered nonprofits and religious congregations.

Health and human services, including education, are the primary focus of nonprofit providers and congregations’ social ministries in Central Louisiana.

- Half the congregations’ social ministries and three-quarters of the nonprofits in Central Louisiana offer programs in health, education, community development, or human services or are multiservice providers.
- Relatively few nonprofit providers in the survey offer arts and cultural programs (5 percent), focus on the environment (3 percent), or advocate for civil rights and other issues (2 percent).
- Half the congregations in the survey offer “other” services—most likely religious or spiritual services.
- Compared with national data in which two-thirds of nonprofits offer health, education, and human services, Central Louisiana has a somewhat higher share of these service providers, perhaps reflecting lower income levels in the region and specific needs of local residents.

Types of Services Provided by Congregations and Nonprofits in Central Louisiana

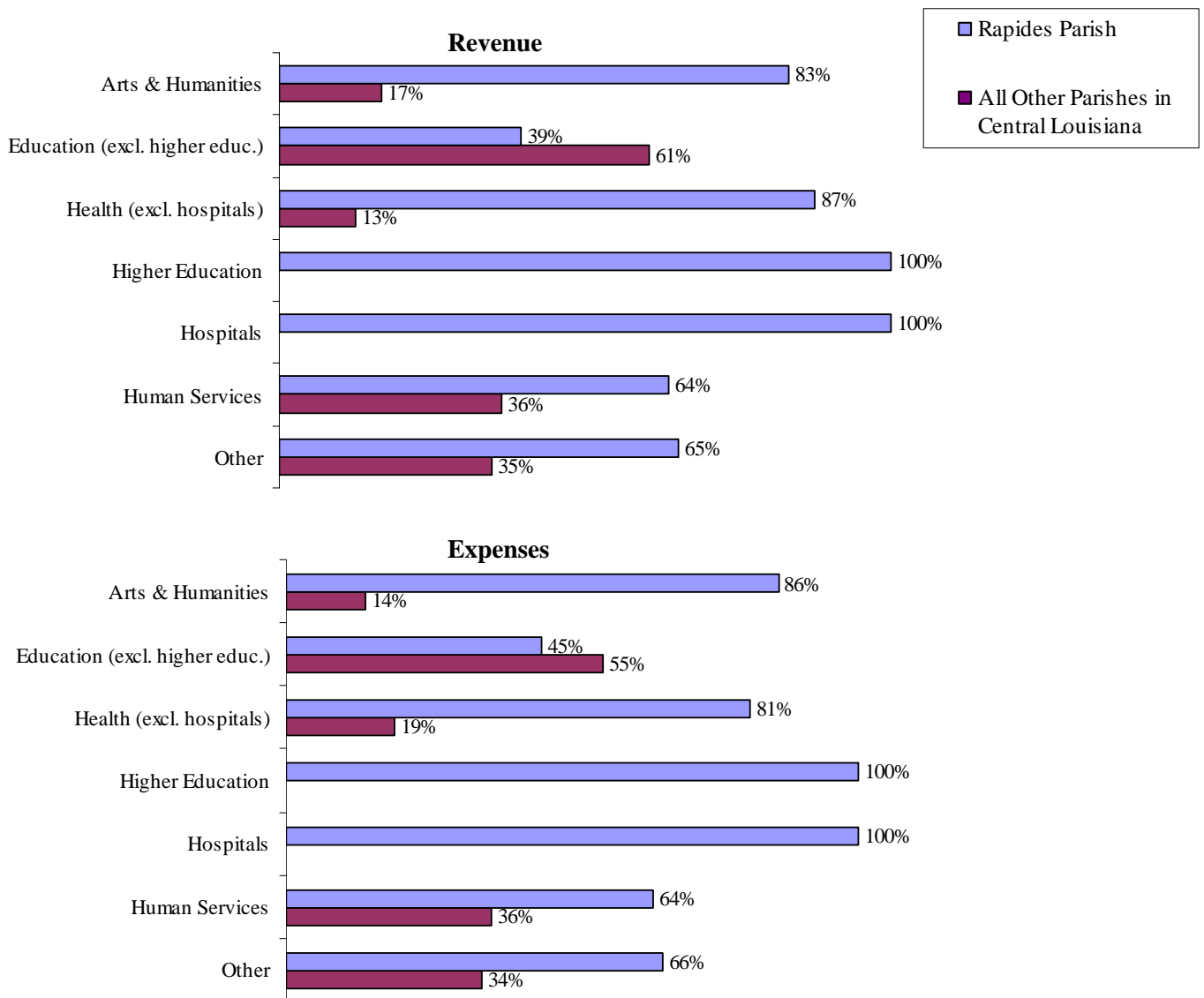


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Most of the nonprofit financial resources are concentrated in Rapides Parish.

- Nearly 90 percent of Central Louisiana’s nonprofit revenues and expenses are located in Rapides Parish.
- In only one service area (i.e., education, excluding higher education) are more financial resources located outside Rapides than within Rapides.
- Given the concentration of resources in Rapides, residents outside Rapides may find it difficult to access services.

Percent of Financial Resources Concentrated in Rapides Parish, 2006

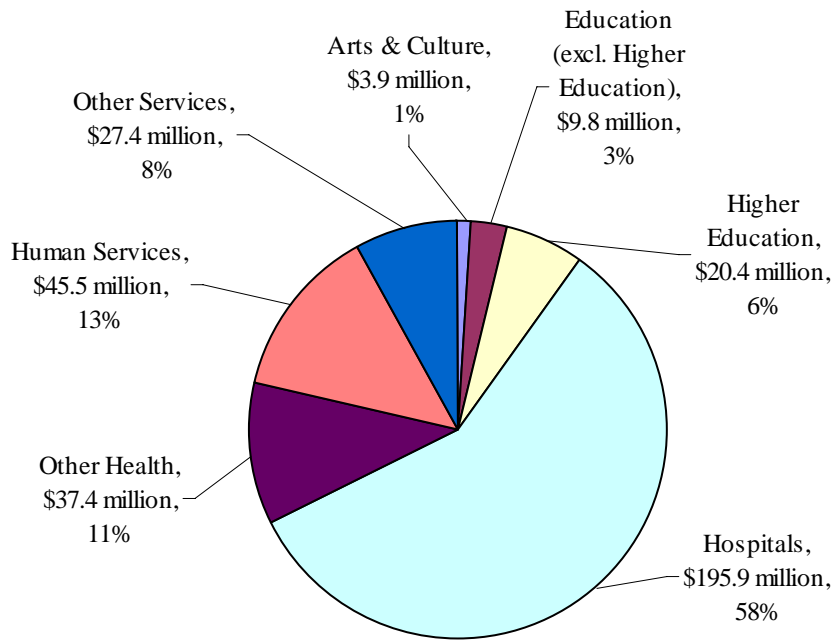


Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.
 Note: Data are based on nonprofits that file a Form 990 with the IRS.

Excluding religious congregations, hospitals and health care providers dominate the region's nonprofit financial picture; human services and education also play significant roles.

- Nearly 70 percent of nonprofit expenditures in Central Louisiana were made by health-related nonprofits.
- The next largest share of spending was in human services (13 percent).
- Educational nonprofits account for 9 percent of the region's nonprofit expenditures.
- Arts organizations have the smallest share of expenditures in Central Louisiana's nonprofit sector (1 percent).

Concentration of Financial Expenditures by Type of Nonprofit in Central Louisiana, 2006



Total Expenses = \$340.2 million

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.

Notes: Data are based on nonprofits that file a Form 990 with the IRS. Values may not sum to the total because of rounding.

Except for hospitals and higher education institutions, the typical nonprofit in the region operates on a modest budget.

- Excluding hospitals and higher education, the average expenditures of nonprofits in Central Louisiana is \$620,000, compared with \$921,000 for the state as a whole.
- Hospitals and higher education nonprofits operate on multimillion dollar budgets.
- Even non-hospital health care providers in Central Louisiana have average expenditures of \$1.4 million, although the median is about \$374,000.
- Arts organizations operate on extremely small budgets, reporting average expenditures of \$142,000, with the median (or typical) expenses around \$53,000.
- Most other nonprofits in Central Louisiana have average expenses of roughly \$500,000. For example, human service providers spent \$589,000 on average.

Operating Budgets for Nonprofit Organizations in Central Louisiana, 2006

Type of service	Number	Revenue		Expenses	
		Average (\$)	Median (\$)	Average (\$)	Median (\$)
Hospitals	1	208,172,451	208,172,451	195,909,352	195,909,352
Higher Education	2	9,988,410	9,988,410	10,178,337	10,178,337
Health (excl. hospitals)	25	2,442,981	435,561	1,475,677	373,852
Education (excl. higher education)	20	699,882	109,802	457,669	86,791
Human Services	72	610,992	250,180	588,965	254,879
All Other	56	576,701	132,914	564,597	114,223
Arts and Culture	27	139,094	55,771	142,189	53,254
All Nonprofits in Central Louisiana (excl. higher education and hospitals)	200	775,572	161,090	619,537	163,452
All Nonprofits in Central Louisiana	203	1,887,998	167,143	1,675,731	168,517
<i>All Nonprofits in Louisiana (excl. higher education and hospitals)</i>	<i>3,422</i>	<i>1,070,141</i>	<i>148,967</i>	<i>920,930</i>	<i>131,993</i>
<i>All Nonprofits in Louisiana</i>	<i>3,503</i>	<i>3,292,007</i>	<i>154,126</i>	<i>3,060,328</i>	<i>136,847</i>

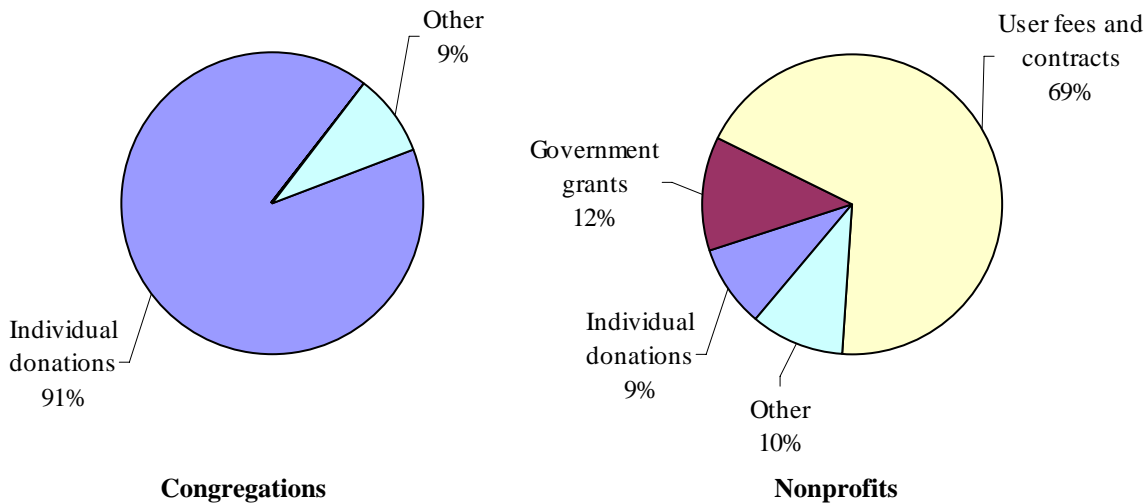
Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.

Note: Data are based on the nonprofits that file a Form 990 with the IRS.

Social ministries and nonprofits rely on very different sources of funding to support their programs.

- Congregations rely almost exclusively on donations from individuals to support their social ministries. Just over 90 percent comes from individual donations.
- Nonprofits primarily rely on government grants and contracts and user fees for their support. Roughly 80 percent of the nonprofit sector's revenues are from these sources.
- Within the nonprofit sector, different types of organizations rely on different sources of funding. For example,
 - health care providers, including hospitals, are highly dependent on user fees and third-party payers, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance companies;
 - nonprofit colleges rely on tuition for more than half of their funding base;
 - human service providers rely heavily on government grants and contracts; and
 - arts and cultural groups look to private donations to support their work.
- Although only 9 percent of the nonprofit sector's funding comes from individual donations, 37 percent of nonprofit survey respondents cited individual donations as a major source of their support.

Sources of Revenue for Congregations and Nonprofits in Central Louisiana, 2006



Sources: Data for nonprofits are from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files, 2006. Data for congregations are from The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Note: Four congregations did not provided information on sources of funding.

Nonprofits in Central Louisiana spend about one-fifth of their budgets on administrative and fundraising expenses.

- Most nonprofit expenditures are spent on program activities.
- Hospitals report the highest level of administrative expenses (28 percent), while human service organizations reported the lowest (8 percent).
- Administrative expenses cover salaries, rent, utilities, and other expenses to keep a program running.
- There is no benchmark on how much an organization should spend on administrative and fundraising costs.

Nonprofit Expenditures Devoted to Program Costs by Service Industry, 2006

Type of service	Number	Total expenses (\$)	Percent of Total Expenses		
			Program expenses	Administrative expenses	Fundraising expenses
Arts and Culture	17	3,578,403	75.3	22.9	1.2
Education (excl. higher education)	16	9,480,935	84.3	13.0	2.8
Higher Education	2	20,356,674	80.8	17.6	1.6
Health (excl. hospitals)	22	37,398,380	78.3	20.9	0.8
Hospitals	1	195,909,352	72.0	27.9	0.2
Human Services	63	44,611,710	91.4	8.0	0.5
Other	34	23,668,002	87.0	10.4	1.2
Total (excl. higher education and hospitals)	152	118,737,430	85.3	13.4	0.9
Total	155	335,003,456	77.2	22.1	0.5

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.

Notes: Data are from the Form 990. The Form 990-EZ does not include information on types of expenses, so organizations that file an EZ form (48 organizations) are not in the analysis. Total expenses in this table (\$355 million) are therefore less than the total for all nonprofits (\$340 million) cited earlier. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Most nonprofits in Central Louisiana report a comfortable margin between their expenses and their revenues, and some even report financial reserves for a rainy day.

- On average, nonprofits in Central Louisiana report an 11 percent surplus for the year, but reports vary considerably by type of service provider.
- Nonprofit health providers, excluding hospitals, have the largest operating margin—a 39 percent surplus for the year.
- Nonprofit hospitals report a 6 percent margin.
- Human service organizations operate close to the break-even point—that is, a 4 percent surplus.
- Arts organizations and higher education, each, report about 2 percent end-of-year deficits.
- About half the survey respondents say they had financial reserves, and most of these say that they could cover about six months of operating expenses.

Operating Margins by Nonprofit Industry in Central Louisiana, 2006

Type of service	Number	Total revenue (\$)	Total expenses (\$)	Operating margin (\$)	Operating margin as a percent of total revenue (%)	Rank
Arts and Culture	28	3,811,142	3,889,344	-78,202	-2.1	7
Education (excl. higher education)	21	14,725,669	9,772,552	4,953,117	33.6	2
Higher Education	2	19,976,819	20,356,674	-379,855	-1.9	6
Health (excl. hospitals)	23	61,443,047	37,423,933	24,019,114	39.1	1
Hospitals	1	208,172,451	195,909,352	12,263,099	5.9	3
Human Services	76	47,347,141	45,466,010	1,881,131	4.0	4
Other	52	27,787,372	27,355,522	431,850	1.6	5
Nonprofits (excl. higher education and hospitals)	200	155,114,371	123,907,361	31,207,010	20.1	
All Nonprofits	203	383,263,641	340,173,387	43,090,254	11.2	

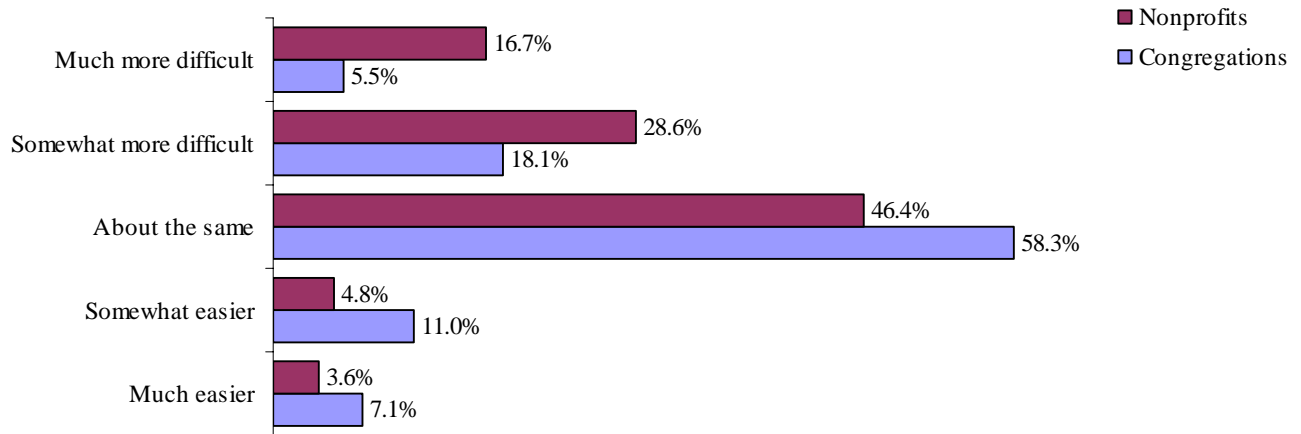
Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), Core Files 2006.

Note: Operating margin = total revenue minus total expenses.

Fundraising has become more difficult in recent years, especially for nonprofits.

- Nearly half (45 percent) of nonprofits in the survey and almost a quarter of congregations (24 percent) say that fundraising in recent years has become more difficult.
- Most congregations (58 percent) think it is about the same.
- The concern expressed by nonprofit directors may reflect not only the current downturn in the economy but also the complexity of raising funds from a variety of sources to meet program needs.

The Extent to Which the Current Fundraising Environment Poses Difficulties



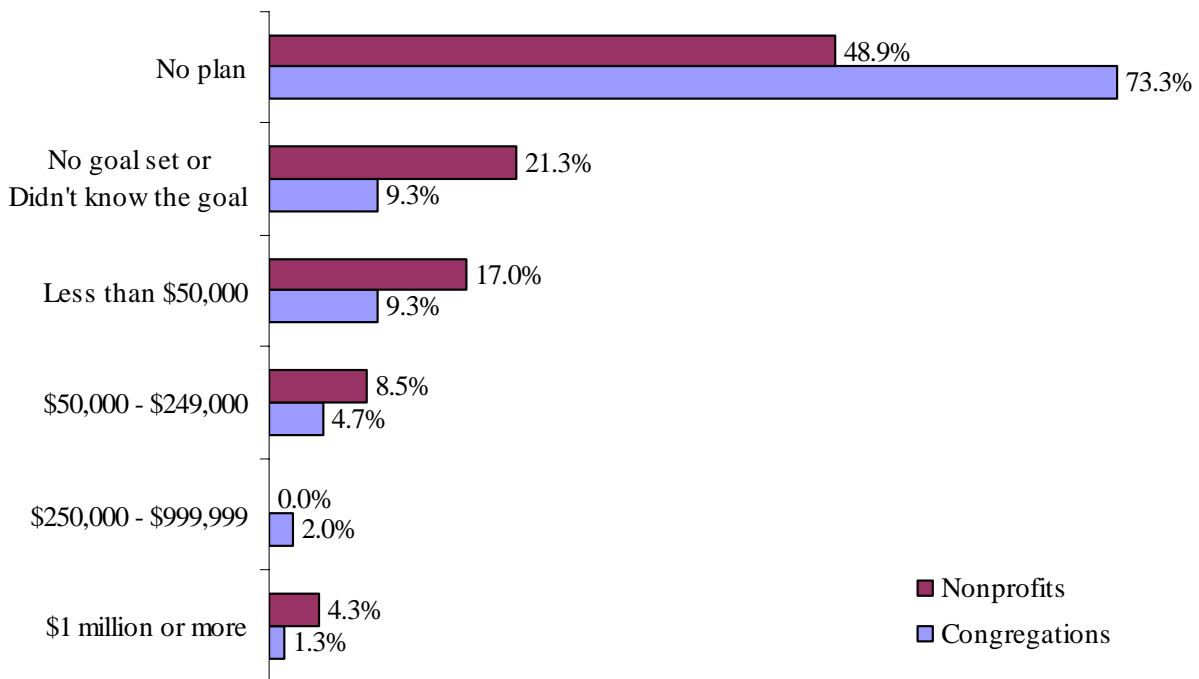
Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Note: Thirty-three respondents did not provide information on their ability to raise funds. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Despite the importance of fundraising, many nonprofits and congregations in the region lack fundraising plans and goals.

- About half the nonprofits and three-quarters of the congregations in the survey say they have no fundraising plan.
- A sizeable share of nonprofit executive directors (about 21 percent) and congregation leaders (9 percent) say they have not set a fundraising goal or they do not know the goal.
- The most common goal is less than \$50,000.

Size of Fundraising Goals

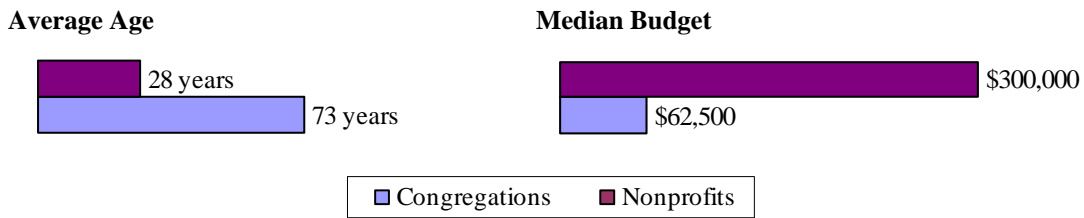


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

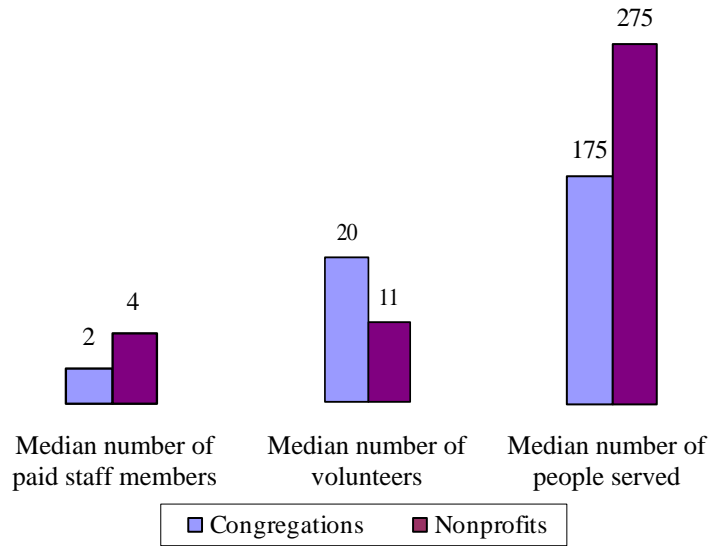
Nonprofit organizations and congregations’ social ministries have distinct organizational structures.

- Congregations are older and operate their social ministries on smaller budgets.
- Nonprofit providers use more paid staff to deliver their services; congregations use more volunteers.
- On average, nonprofits tend to serve more people in a typical month than do congregations. The larger size of the nonprofits is an indicator of the capacity to assist.

Organization Age and Budgets of Nonprofits and Congregation’s Social Ministries, 2006



Number of Paid Staff, Volunteers, and People Served, 2006

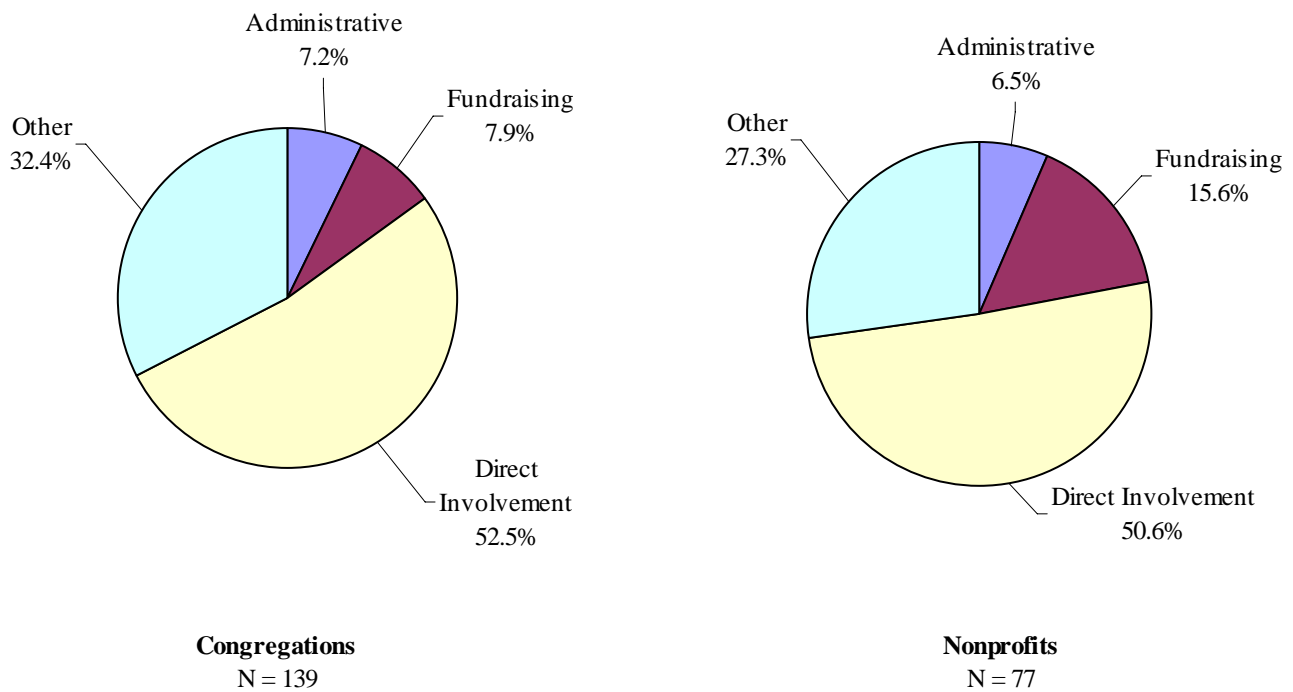


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Note: Twelve respondents did not provide information on the age of the organizations, and 72 respondents did not provide information on the size of their budget. Seventy-two respondents did not provide information on the number of paid staff, 74 respondents did not provide information on the number of volunteers, and 86 respondents did not provide information on the number of people served.

Volunteers are considered absolutely essential in helping both congregations and nonprofits achieve their goals; volunteers work directly with clients to deliver their programs and services.

- Roughly 85 percent of congregations and 74 percent of nonprofits in the survey rate volunteers as absolutely essential.
- About half of congregations and nonprofits use volunteers to work directly with the clients and users of the programs.
- Nonprofits are about twice as likely as congregations to ask volunteers to help with fundraising (16 percent of nonprofits versus 8 percent of congregations).
- Both congregations and nonprofits have seen an increase in the number of volunteers in the past three years.

Activities That Volunteers Perform

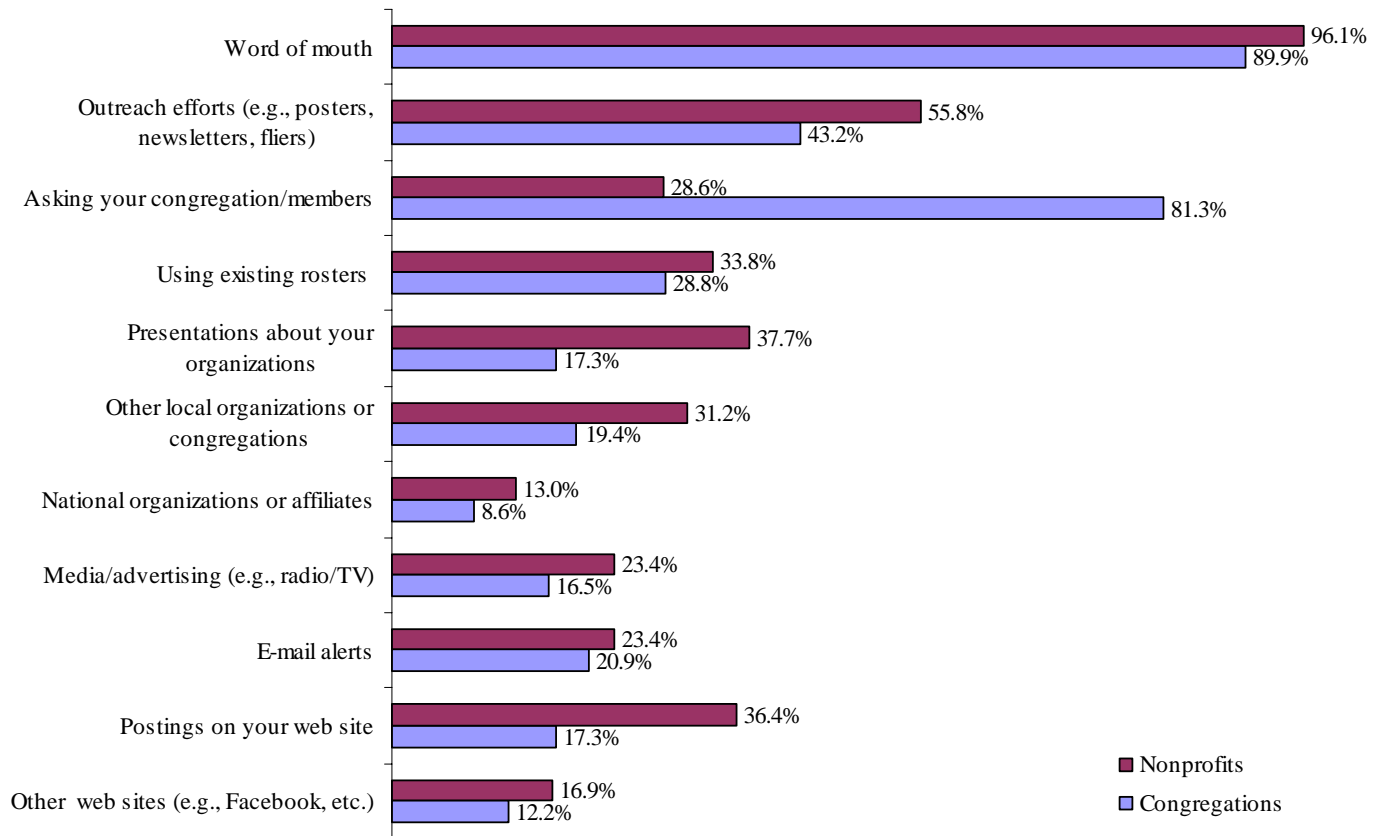


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Note: Twenty-six respondents did not use volunteers, and two organizations did not provide information on the volunteer base.

Both nonprofits and congregations use traditional communication tools to recruit volunteers, but a sizeable share is using the Internet.

- The main method of recruiting volunteers is by word of mouth. Ninety percent of congregations and 96 percent of nonprofits use this method.
- Eighty-one percent of congregations rely on their own members as a source of volunteers.
- Outreach efforts, such as posters, newsletters, and fliers are very common ways to recruit volunteers.
- A sizeable share of nonprofits and congregations is using the Internet to recruit volunteers. About one in three nonprofits and one in five congregations are on the Net.

Methods of Recruiting Volunteers

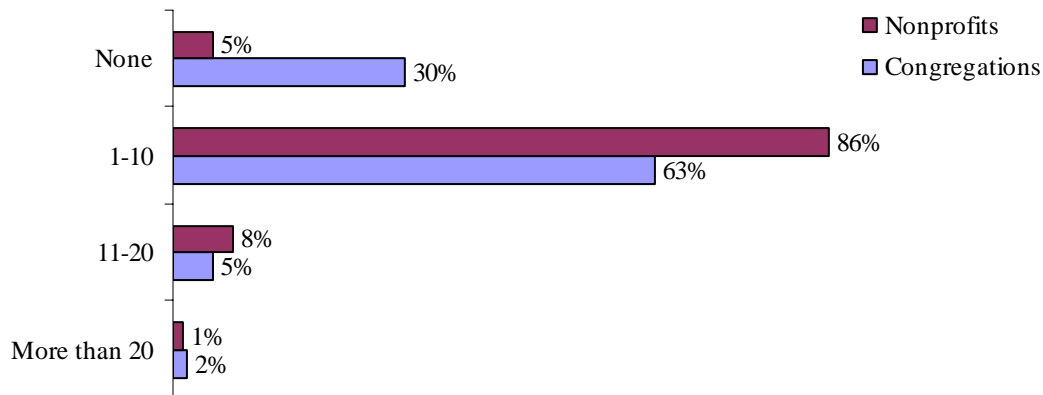


Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Notes: Percentages do not add to 100 because respondents could select multiple methods for recruiting volunteers. Twenty-six respondents did not use volunteers, and two respondents did not provide information on methods of recruiting volunteers.

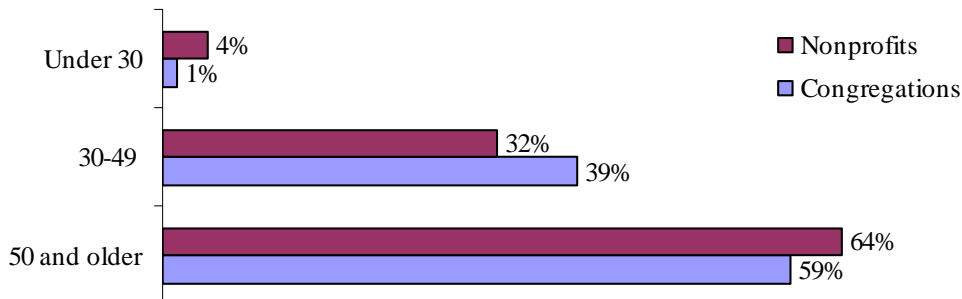
Compared with congregations, the leadership of nonprofits is likely to include more women and young people.

- Nonprofit boards tend to be larger than congregation boards. The average nonprofit has about 14 board members, compared with 10 board members, on average, for congregations.
- About 30 percent of congregations have no women on their governing boards, compared with 5 percent of nonprofits.
- Fewer than 5 percent of nonprofits and congregations have leaders under age 30.
- Young leaders seem to enter the nonprofit sector as heads of small organizations; larger organizations tend to have older leaders.
- There is substantial turnover of executive leadership. Half the survey respondents say their executive director or pastor has been with the organization for five years or less.

The Percentage of Boards in Central Louisiana with Women, 2006



Age of Leaders in Congregations and Nonprofits in Central Louisiana, 2006



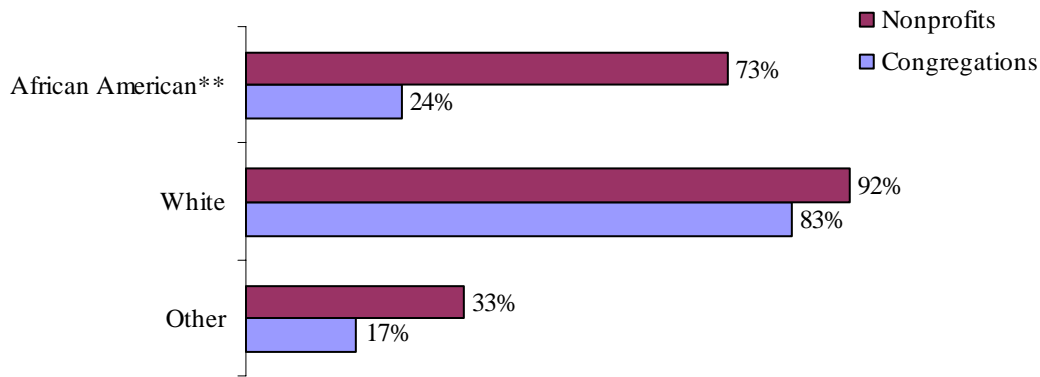
Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Notes: Fifty-one respondents did not provide information on the gender of board members. Four respondents did not provide information on the age of the executive director or pastor. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

The racial-ethnic composition of governing boards has remained roughly the same over the past three years, although the tendency has been to increase rather than decrease diversity.

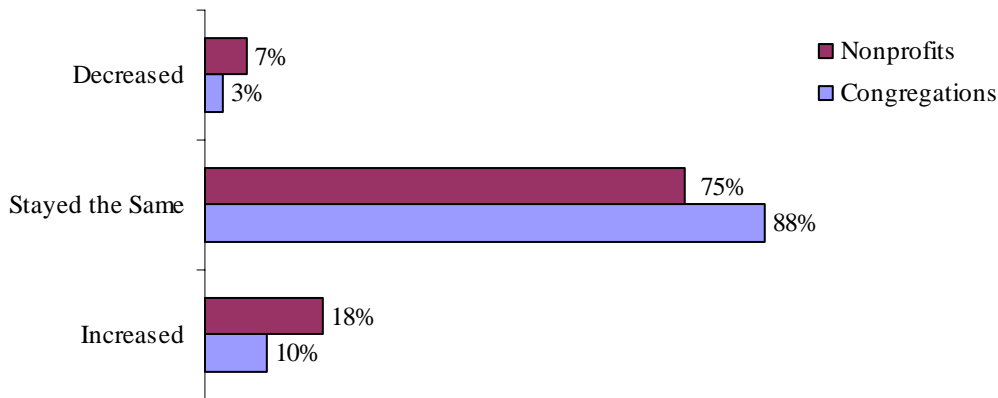
- Of those surveyed, people of color are on about three-quarters of nonprofit boards.
- Of those surveyed, people of color are on a quarter of congregation boards, which generally select board members from their parishioners.
- Whites make up the majority of governing boards, although many boards have African Americans.
- A handful of boards have members who are Asian, Latino, and Native American.
- Most governing boards have remained the same size over the past three years.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Congregation and Nonprofit Boards



** Difference for African American board members is significant at the 0.01 level.

In the Past Three Years, Racial/ethnic Diversity of the Board has:



Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
 Notes: Fifty-six respondents did not provide information the how the race/ethnicity of the board has changed. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Congregations and nonprofits in Central Louisiana both collaborate with other organizations, but nonprofits are likely to have a more extensive list of partners.

- Sixty-three percent of congregations work with other congregations, whereas 55 percent of nonprofits work with other nonprofits. But partnerships and collaborations are also formed with other types of organizations.
- Roughly half of nonprofits (54 percent) and congregations (48 percent) work with K–12 schools.
- About 40 percent of nonprofits and congregations work with hospitals.
- About a third of nonprofits (35 percent) and a quarter of congregations (28 percent) collaborate with businesses and employers in the community.
- Nonprofits are much more likely than congregations to work with government. Nearly 44 percent of nonprofits work with state and local government compared with 23 percent of congregations, and twice as many nonprofits work with federal government (25 percent versus 11 percent, respectively). This may reflect in part the greater dependence of nonprofits on government funding as a source of financial support.

Types of Organizations in Collaboration with Each Other

Congregations that collaborate with	(%)	Nonprofits that collaborate with	(%)
Other congregations	63.3	Other nonprofits	55.3
Nonprofits	50.7	K–12 schools	54.3
K–12 schools	48.0	State or local government	43.6
Hospitals	41.3	Other congregations	42.6
Higher education	28.0	Higher education	39.4
Business or employers	28.0	Hospitals	39.4
State or local government	22.7	Business or employers	35.1
Federal government	11.3	Federal government	24.5
None of the above	18.0	None of the above	14.9
Number of Respondents	150	Number of Respondents	94

Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because respondents could indicate multiple collaborations.

Collaborations take various forms; the most common type is providing services to other groups.

- About three-quarters of nonprofits (74 percent) and congregations (76 percent) provide some type of service to the organizations with which they collaborate.
- Another common type of collaboration is referring clients to other groups for service. Roughly half the congregations (50 percent) and nonprofits (46 percent) refer clients to other groups.
- About half the nonprofits (48 percent) and almost two-fifths of congregations (37 percent) receive referrals from other organizations.
- About half the survey respondents say they work with other groups to discuss community issues.
- Congregations are more likely than nonprofits to work with other groups to take action on community issues—48 percent versus 38 percent, respectively.
- Sharing resources such as space, equipment, and supplies was less commonly done—about 40 percent of congregations and 35 percent of nonprofits share resources.

Activities within the Collaboration

Type of activities	Congregations	Nonprofits
	(%)	(%)
Provide services to these groups	76.4	73.8
Receive services from these groups	19.5	30.0
Refer individuals or families to these groups	50.4	46.3
Receive referrals from these groups	36.6	47.5
Work with these groups to discuss community issues	55.3	51.3
Work with these groups to take action on community issues	48.0	37.5
Provide financial support to these groups	43.9	28.8
Receive financial support from these groups	12.2	45.0
Provide advice or instructions to these organizations	34.1	45.0
Receive advice or instructions from these organizations	25.2	38.8
Share resources such as space, equipment, supplies, etc.	40.7	35.0
Number of Respondents	123	80

Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Notes: Percentages do not add to 100 because respondents could indicate multiple ways that they collaborated with other groups. Forty-one respondents did not provide information on shared activities.

Congregations and nonprofits promote civic engagement in different ways.

- ❏ Nonprofits are somewhat more likely than congregations to engage in public education activities, such as mailing information and fact sheets or placing stories in the local media.
- ❏ In contrast, congregations are more likely to take actions that can be broadly described as advocacy—such as encouraging people to vote, contact an elected official, or raise money for a particular cause.
- ❏ These differences may reflect the long tradition of the religious community to “speak truth to power” and may also reflect nonprofits’ concern about losing their 501(c)(3) status if they engage in lobbying.

Techniques for Educating the Community about Important Issues

Activity to promote civic engagement	Congregations (%)	Nonprofits (%)
Send educational materials via mail	32.9	47.3
Place stories on local TV/radio stations	32.2	42.9
Place information on your web site	25.5	38.5
Send information via e-mail	20.8	33.0
Hold occasional meetings to discuss issues	28.2	30.8
Hold regular meetings to discuss issues	12.1	22.0
Use online social networking tools	8.1	13.2
Other	20.1	13.2
Do not do these type of activities	22.8	15.4
Number of Respondents	149	91

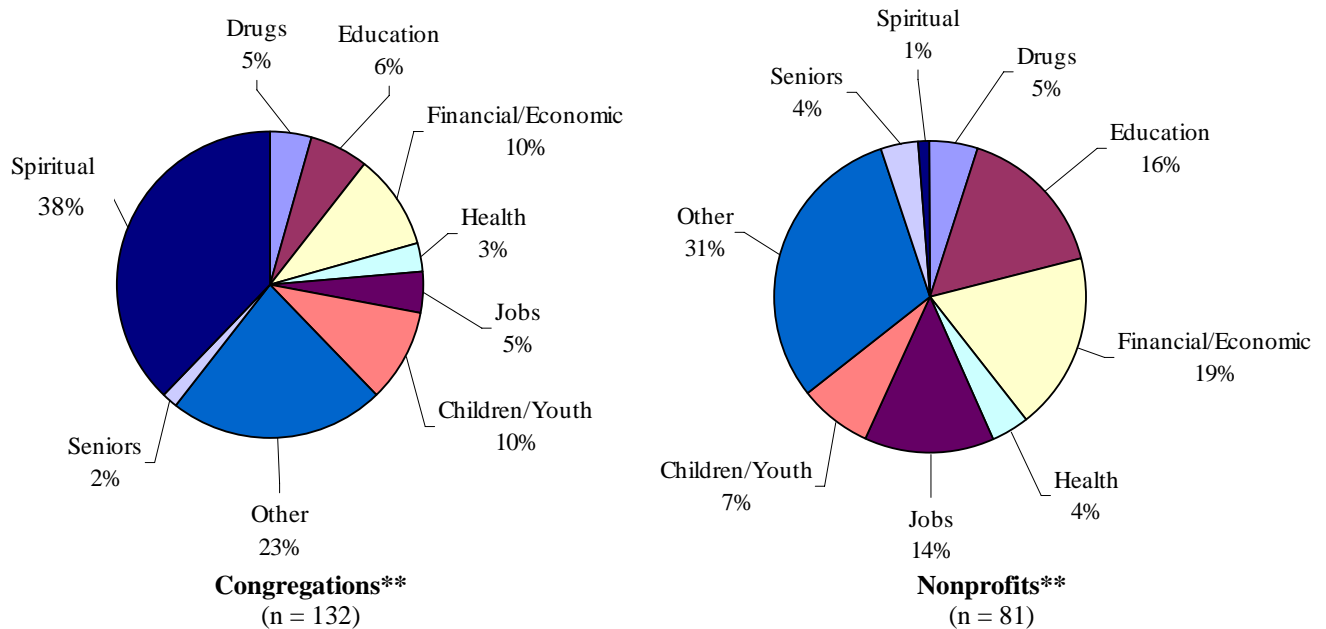
Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Notes: Percentages do not add to 100 because respondents could indicate multiple ways in which they educate the community. Four respondents did not provide information on important community issues.

Congregation and nonprofit leaders in Central Louisiana tend to agree that the economy, education, and children and youth are the region’s most pressing and urgent issues.

- About two in five clergy also say that greater spiritual and moral values are needed.
- Although the specific rankings of each issue vary, respondents generally agree that the economy, financial distress, jobs, education, and helping young people are the most important issues facing the region.

Most Urgent Problem in the Region



Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.
 Notes: Thirty-one respondents did not provide information on the most urgent problem. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.
 ** Difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Half of clergy and nonprofit leaders feel that the quality of life in Central Louisiana is getting better.

- Most survey respondents express positive views on how adequately community issues are being addressed.
- About half the clergy and nonprofit leaders say that the general quality of life in the region is on the right track or strongly on the right track and getting better.
- However, about 29 percent of clergy and 22 percent of nonprofit leaders say that quality of life is either on the wrong track or strongly on the wrong track.
- About one in five clergy (21 percent) and one in four (26 percent) nonprofit leaders say the quality of life in Central Louisiana was about the same.
- These findings may suggest some tension and differences of opinion about the direction that the region is moving to provide a good quality of life for its residents.

Adequacy of Addressing Pressing Issues and Quality of Life in the Region

Perspectives of leaders	Congregations (%)	Nonprofits (%)
Respondents who said pressing issues were being addressed:		
Very adequately	13.4	3.9
Somewhat adequately	31.5	36.8
Adequately	20.5	15.8
Not too adequately	15.7	17.1
Not very adequately	15.0	17.1
Issue not being addressed	3.9	9.2
Number of Respondents	127	76
Respondents who said overall quality of life in Central Louisiana was:		
Strongly wrong track	12.1	17.8
Wrong track	17.0	4.4
Staying about the same	20.6	25.6
Right track	32.6	32.2
Strongly right track	17.7	20.0
Number of Respondents	141	90

Source: The Urban Institute–LSU 2008–09 survey of nonprofits and congregations in Central Louisiana.

Notes: Forty-one respondents did not provide information on how pressing issue was being addresses, and 13 respondents did not provide information on the overall quality of life in Central Louisiana. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Summary

The survey findings suggest that civil society in Central Louisiana is a strong and vital part of the region. It includes a mixture of religious congregations and nonprofit organizations; each has different strengths and makes different contributions to the community. The nonprofit sector is an important economic contributor to the region, and both nonprofits and religious congregations in Central Louisiana play vital roles in helping people in need and providing cultural and civic opportunities to local residents.

Overall, congregations and nonprofits appear to represent different aspects of the civil society structure in Central Louisiana. Congregations have long histories of service in the community. They are found in large numbers throughout the region, although their social ministry programs tend to work primarily within their own parishes. On average, the budgets for social ministry programs are relatively modest, but they nonetheless reach a substantial number of people given their resources. Congregations also appear to be a strong voice in addressing community concerns, and many congregations take an active role in encouraging civic participation.

In contrast, nonprofits are not as numerous as congregations and are relatively new organizations. However, they have larger budgets than congregations and greater capacity to serve more people. They offer more types of services than congregations, and many nonprofits try to extend their services beyond the parish in which their headquarters is located. Many nonprofits in Central Louisiana try to educate the public about important issues, but relatively few undertake advocacy activities that would encourage residents to participate in civic affairs.

Organizationally, two key differences set congregations and nonprofits apart. First, their major sources of financial support differ. For congregations, donations from individuals are the most important (and often only) source of support for their social ministries. Individual donations appear to be a stable and reliable source of income for these programs. In contrast, the most important funding stream for nonprofits is government, although many other sources of funding, including individual donations, make up the typical nonprofit budget. The financial base of nonprofit organizations is always in flux, especially when government changes its policy priorities. Given this financial reality, nonprofit leaders must be social entrepreneurs to capitalize on funding opportunities and to sustain their programs.

Second, the leadership of the nonprofit sector is very diverse, providing opportunities for women, minorities, and young people to serve as executive directors and on governing boards. Congregations rely more prominently on men and older individuals to serve in leadership positions.



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