

# STATE OF THE SECTOR



CATALYZING A THRIVING NONPROFIT COMMUNITY





# UTA State of the Sector Research Team

Dr. Emily Nwakpuda



Emily I. Nwakpuda, Ph.D., MPA, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Affairs and Planning at the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA) at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). Dr. Nwakpuda teaches graduate courses focused on nonprofit organizations, research and evaluation methods, policy analysis, and ethics. She is a 2023 Service-Learning Faculty Fellow in the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning Excellence at UTA.

Dr. Nwakpuda is an interdisciplinary researcher developing a robust research pipeline focused on topics that shape communities, including nonprofits and philanthropy, community development, social innovation, social equity, and homelessness. Such work has allowed her to develop skills in policy analysis, survey design, interview methodology, statistical analysis, and program evaluation. In addition, Dr. Nwakpuda is actively conducting community-based research in collaboration with local nonprofits. Her research extends the public management and public policy literature.

She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Ph.D. in Public Policy. Her doctoral research won a National Science Foundation research enhancement grant. Dr. Nwakpuda is currently an associate member of the National Academy of Public Administration Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance.

Dr. Karabi Bezboruah



Karabi Bezboruah, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Affairs and Planning at the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA) at the University of Texas at Arlington. She is also the Ph.D. Director for the two doctoral programs at CAPPA.

Dr. Bezboruah teaches administration and policy courses in the department of Public Affairs and Planning. She facilitates the graduate Certificate in Urban Nonprofit Management. She applies service-learning pedagogy in her courses, and has worked with community organizations, nonprofits, and local government agencies. She has won multiple teaching awards and most recently was inducted into the *UTA Academy of Distinguished Teachers*.

Dr. Bezboruah's research includes cross sector collaboration, nonprofit management and leadership, strategic management, community development, nonprofit effectiveness, and role of gender and leadership in nonprofit management. Her work is in the intersection between public policies and organizational behavior, and she received several grants to work on these areas.

# Mission

In partnership, the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation, the United Way of Tarrant County (UWTC), the City of Arlington, and The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) seek to help meet the ongoing internal and external needs of the Arlington nonprofit sector by developing a comprehensive research study to support the collective capacity of the sector.

Research funding provided by:



Research Partners:



United Way of Tarrant County



#ThrivingCommUNITY



# Vision

We envision an Arlington nonprofit community ready to support a prosperous future for all, especially for residents experiencing or at risk of poverty. This initiative is a big step forward in understanding Arlington nonprofits and their needs. Specifically, this project seeks to help Arlington nonprofits attract and retain talent, become more fiscally secure, adopt new processes and mechanisms for success, diversify funding streams, and document their success post-pandemic.

This research will help create opportunities for all Arlington nonprofits to flourish and support synergy within the sector. Ultimately, residents, families, and other local institutions should benefit from this exploration of the Arlington nonprofit community. This critical investment in research and evaluation should also serve as a model project that communities beyond Arlington can learn from and replicate.



# Principles and Values

To ensure this initiative can identify the support systems for a thriving nonprofit community, the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation, the United Way of Tarrant County, the City of Arlington, and The University of Texas at Arlington representatives leading this research project are committed to the following principles and values.



**Conducting high-quality research** is core to this initiative. To help Arlington nonprofits continue to provide high-value service, we establish data collection and sharing procedures that enhance our collective understanding of the sector and its dynamic needs. Our methodological approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods to inform a comprehensive analysis process.

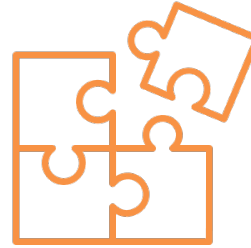


**Progressing community development** through this community-based project is critical to assessing the Arlington nonprofit sector's capacity. Community-engaged research allows this initiative to bridge theory to practice to improve community well-being through public engagement and feedback. Promoting evidence-based research with the help of our local municipality and philanthropic organizations further ensures that this work enriches the local community.

# Principles and Values



**Prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion** is a core value for this research initiative. The Arlington nonprofit sector comprises unique organizations with diverse staff, leaders, and clients whose characteristics, experiences, and perspectives are valued. This project is strengthened by working with and learning from those who contribute to the sector. The findings of this work will increase equity and inclusion in the Arlington nonprofit sector by improving access to resources and opportunities for all.



**Cross-sector growth** is essential to the strategic development of the nonprofit sector. We recognize the needs of citizens are not exclusively met by the nonprofit sector alone. Therefore, findings from this initiative will inform partnerships between the for-profit, governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors. We strive to identify and leverage the shared synergy across sectors to help the Arlington nonprofit sector thrive.

# Eligibility

**This research study will engage nonprofit organizations that meet one or more of the following criteria:**

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## 1. 501(c)3

Arlington-based nonprofits with an Arlington address and a 501(c)(3) designation, including faith-based organizations.

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## 2. The Foundation

Past and current recipients of grant funding from the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation.

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## 3. United Way

Past and present recipients of grant funding from the United Way of Tarrant County.

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## 4. CDBG & ESG

Past and current recipients of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) from the City of Arlington.

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## 5. IRS

Nonprofits identified from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) database that meet one or more of the above criteria qualify for this research study.

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## 6. SUPPORT ARLINGTON

Nonprofits outside of Arlington with 501(c)(3) designations that provide substantial support to the Arlington community and have missions that align with the needs of Arlington may also be included in this research study to ensure a robust sample of nonprofits.





# Project Goals & Objectives



# Goal 1: Gather data and deeper perspectives on the Arlington nonprofit sector.



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## Objective 1a:

- Collect data on the Arlington nonprofit sector's workforce, financial practices, outputs, outcomes, outreach, and facilities from the IRS database and related sources.

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## Objective 1b:

- Evaluate the professional capacity of leaders, staff members, and volunteers to achieve organizational targets.

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## Objective 1c:

- Assess clients' unmet needs and how these needs have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic.

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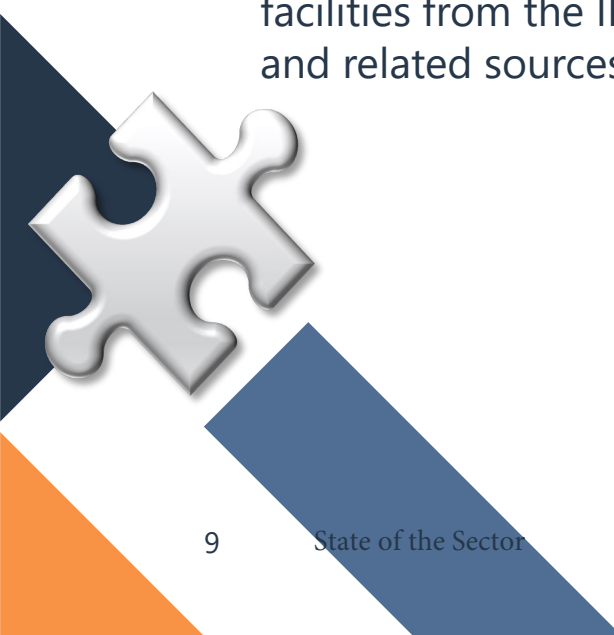
## Objective 1d:

- Discuss Arlington nonprofits' current or desired evaluation and capacity-building efforts.

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## Objective 1e:

- Understand how administrative and managerial practices reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion of women and ethnic minorities in the sector.



# Goal 2: Collect insights from Arlington nonprofit leaders and local partners.

## Objective 2a:

- Discuss barriers to capacity building in the Arlington nonprofit sector.

## Objective 2b:

- Examine Arlington nonprofits' diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

## Objective 2c:

- Consider how Arlington nonprofits adjust their financial, administrative, and organizational capacities to accommodate crises.



# Goal 3: Share evidence of the local nonprofit sector's capacity with stakeholders

## Objective 3a:

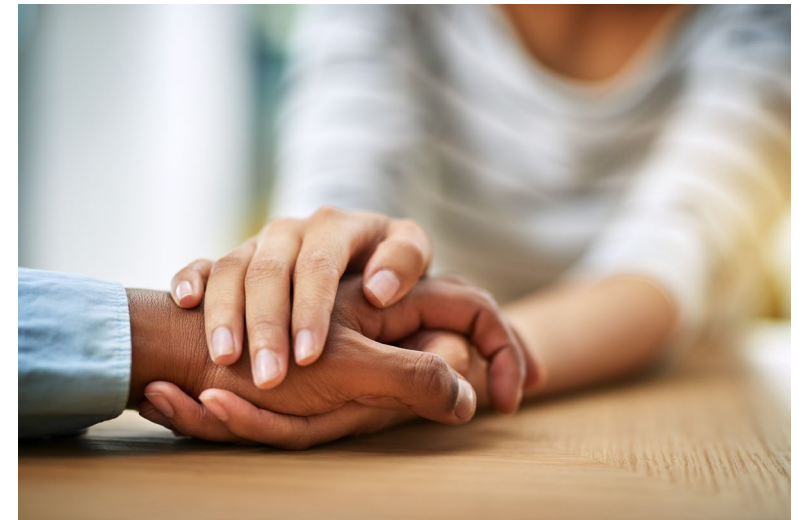
- Provide a synopsis of the sectoral practices, needs, and desired types of support to augment financial, administrative, and managerial capacities.

## Objective 3b:

- Identify innovative approaches that helped local nonprofits weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Objective 3c:

- Assess how local nonprofits engage the diverse Arlington community across racial and cultural boundaries.



# Goal 4: **Develop a profile of the Arlington nonprofit sector.**

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## Objective 4a:

- Assess the degree to which organizational resources are efficiently used and effectively targeted to achieve organizational impact.

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## Objective 4b:

- Examine partnerships or collaborations that reinforce the capacity of Arlington's nonprofits.

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## Objective 4c:

- Provide a roadmap for capacity building in the sector to address the most pressing problems and the corresponding solutions.





A high-angle, top-down photograph of a diverse group of people standing in a circle on a wooden floor. They are all reaching their hands towards the center, where they are stacked on top of each other. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Project Outcomes' is written in a white, serif font across the lower-middle part of the image.

# Project Outcomes

# Outcomes

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1.

Produce metrics/benchmarks that can help establish shared processes for Arlington nonprofits through community-engaged research.

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3.

Develop capacity-building training to address the internal and external needs of the Arlington nonprofit sector.

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2.

Bridge gaps in nonprofits' and funders' understanding of the sector's capacity-building needs.

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4.

Promote equitable practices within future capacity-building training for Arlington nonprofits.



# Outcomes

5.

Improve how local nonprofits steward organizational finances, lead staff, and serve clients.

6.

Create sustainable pathways for public engagement and community feedback about the Arlington nonprofit sector.

7.

Expand relationships between nonprofits and funders in the local sector.

8.

Increase the Arlington nonprofit sector's overall well-being and collective impact.







# Project Timeline & Deliverables



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## Phase 1: **February-May 2023: (4 months)**

**Deliverable 1:** UTA researchers will produce a list of all known nonprofits with a 501(c)(3) designation in Arlington. This report will also offer preliminary data on these nonprofits' core assets, growth areas, and impacts related to capacity building for the Arlington nonprofit sector. More specifically, the findings from this information gathering will inform nine capacity measures. The nine measures are the following:

1. Human capital (workforce)
2. Financial capital
3. Physical capital (facilities)
4. Social capital (relationships)
5. Human resource tasks
6. Internal organizational systems
7. Open systems (outreach activities)
8. Programming
9. Board of directors' status

This information will help frame the development of evidence-based strategies to support the success of local nonprofits.

## Phase 2: **June 2023- September 2023 (4 months)**

**Deliverable 2:** In consultation with local nonprofits and community leaders, UTA researchers will design and release a survey to Arlington nonprofit leaders via email and direct mail. The analysis of survey data will reveal nonprofits' present capacity needs. Additionally, UTA researchers, faculty and students, will interview a sample of community leaders to contextualize and validate important trends in the capacity assessment findings. Finally, an initial report will be prepared to update stakeholders on the project's progress.



# Timeline & Deliverables

## Phase 3: **October 2023-January 2024 (4 months)**

**Deliverable 3:** UTA researchers will develop a novel interactive dashboard to automate and graphically depict results and disseminate study findings. The dashboard will extend preexisting data on nonprofits, such as the 211 data that the United Way of Tarrant County currently produces. Furthermore, to streamline the dashboard design, the Foundation, UWTC, and UTA will solicit Arlington nonprofits to participate in testing the dashboard for greater data reliability. Concurrently, in partnership, the Foundation, UWTC, and UTA will plan a one-day workshop at UTA to facilitate a deeper discussion around the gaps and opportunities in the Arlington nonprofit sector's capacity to deliver services to the Arlington community effectively. Nonprofit leaders and representatives who completed the survey will be among the first Arlington nonprofits invited to the June 2024 workshop at UTA.

## Phase 4: **February- July 2024 (5 months)**

**Deliverable 4:** UTA researchers will provide a final report detailing the research process, findings, and conclusions with practical recommendations about the Arlington nonprofit sector's capacity. Notably, results will feature estimates of the efficiency and effectiveness of financial resource utilization by nonprofits included in the research study. In addition, the research team plans to design the State of the Sector Report in a manner that extends UWTC's annual report to the community. Therefore, subsequent capacity needs studies of the Arlington nonprofit sector will connect to other evidence-building initiatives in the City of Arlington.





# Thank you

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We appreciate Arlington nonprofits' commitment and strong work ethic; we look forward to working together.

## Questions?