

Progressive Technology Project Summary of Fall 99 Grants Pool Survey Results

As part of a 1999 fall grants round, the Progressive Technology Project conducted a survey of applicant grassroots organizing groups. This survey was designed to gather information about the needs and capacities of small to mid-sized grassroots groups who recognize the need to use information technology to strengthen their work. Fifty-two organizations from 25 states participated in the survey. No organization in this summary had a budget over \$850,000. This is a preliminary summary of the results.

Organizational Snapshot

Pct. of urban groups/ Pct. of rural groups	73%/27%
Avg. organizational budget	\$250,000
Avg. number of full time staff	4.5
Avg. number of part time staff	2.5
Avg. number of computers per organization	6
Avg. number of computers per organization having access to the Internet	3
Avg. number of computers 4 years and older	3

Constituencies

Groups were asked to describe their constituencies:

- 34% of these groups worked with or are comprised of communities of color, particularly African Americans, Latinos and Native peoples; and
- 44% identified themselves as working with low-income and working class communities.

Barriers

Groups were asked to indicate the three greatest barriers to using technology strategically in their work:

- 61% indicated the lack of **new equipment and hardware** as an obstacle;
- 58% indicated they **lacked the necessary skills, understanding or training** to use their computer and information systems;
- 24% cited the **prohibitive cost of equipment, training and services** for information technology; and
- 20% said they simply didn't have the **time**.

Needs

Groups described their three greatest technology needs:

- 73% of groups said they **needed hardware, software or other equipment**;
- 44% identified **capacity building** as a primary need, usually **through training or skills improvement**;
- 51% of these groups simply desired **access to communications technology**, specifically the Internet but also phone and fax capability; and
- 18% indicated they **needed a strategic plan** to implement technology in their organizing work.

Problem Solving

Finally, groups were asked how they solve their technology related problems:

- 52% relied on **outside consultants and services** and in-house staff;
- 35% reported using **under trained in-house staff**; and
- 30% received **volunteer or in-kind assistance**.

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