



SAGE Not-For-Profit Data Capacity & Needs Assessment Survey: Results Report

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Policy Wise
for Children & Families

Not-for-profit Data Capacity and Needs Assessment

The Secondary Analysis to Generate Evidence (SAGE) not-for-profit survey 2018 was sent out to the not-for-profit community (NFP) in April 2018.

Survey objective

To assess data capacity needs by understanding whether, and how, not-for-profit agencies manage and share the data they collect.

400+

NFP agencies in Alberta received an invitation to complete the SAGE NFP Survey

116

Responses to the survey received by late May 2018

Attitudes Towards Data

Most organizations see data as an asset.



Data Management

Organizations value data, but managing it comes with challenges. Here are the top five:

- Staff need more training
- Data are not consistently formatted
- Data are not linked
- Data are incomplete
- Databases are not user-friendly

Data Sharing

Despite challenges, the majority of organizations see value in sharing data to:



Better understand the client population



Provide better service



Report on funding



Collaborate with other non-profits



Support research/evaluation



Provide referrals to other non-profits



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1. Introduction

The Secondary Analysis to Generate Evidence (SAGE) team surveyed the not-for-profit community (hereafter referred to as “NFP”) in April 2018 to assess data capacity and needs. The survey sought to understand how (or whether) NFP agencies manage and share the data they collected.

Approximately 400 NFP agencies in Alberta received an invitation to complete the SAGE NFP Survey. A total of 116 responses to the survey were received by late May 2018. The survey could be completed anonymously, or the NFP organization could self-identify. Respondents were asked to respond once per organization.

A total of 52 of the respondents identified the organizations for which they work. From these, in only one case we found data duplication, i.e., the same responses were submitted twice for the same organization. The repeated record was deleted, leaving a total of 115 responses. Unfortunately, data duplication could not be assessed for non-identified organizations.

In general, respondents could select more than one option for each of the survey questions (except for items 2.6 and 2.7 below). Therefore most of the results described below are reported as frequency rather than percentages.

Finally, although the organizations were categorized in different service areas (see item 2.1 below), only overall analyses are reported below (with the exception of a few items below) – further analysis showed that, for most of the questions, the overall results were consistent across specific subgroups of organizations (e.g., social service; addictions and mental health; maternal, newborn, child and youth; and education and research, etc.).

*Please note that these survey results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size, possibility of data duplication for non-identified organizations (around 55% of the responses), self-selection bias of respondents, and sampling bias (most of the organizations invited to participate in the survey were directly or indirectly connected to PolicyWise for Children & Families).

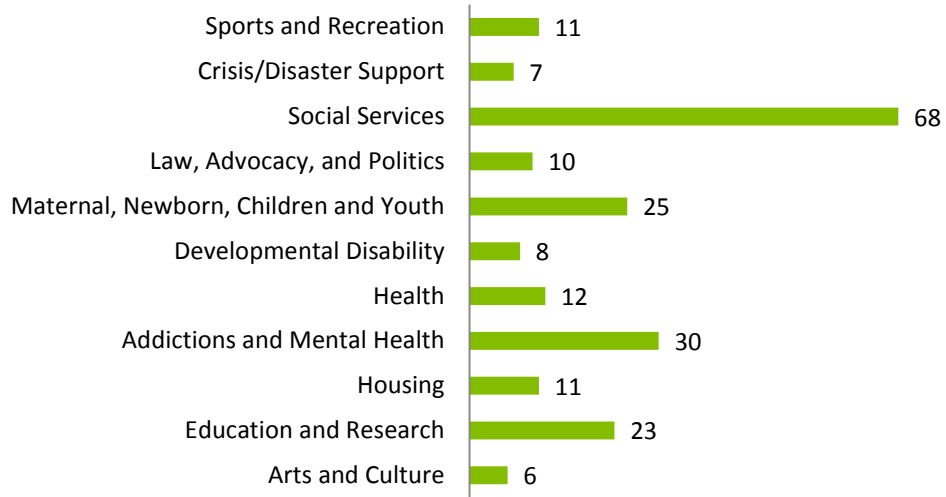
2. Results

2.1. *NFP classification*

The largest number of organizations was classified under the social service category. The next most selected categories were: (a) addictions and mental health; (b) maternal, newborn, children and youth; and (c) education and health, respectively.

It is important to note that 22 of the respondents did not classify their organizations in any of the 11 categories provided (see figure below). However, after careful inspection of their websites and the commentaries left in the open-text box, we manually assigned these 22 agencies to the pertinent categories.

How would you classify your organization? (N = 115)



2.2. Data management practices

Most of the organizations see data as an asset. In addition, the majority of the NFPs described their data management practices as deliberate, documented and performed consistently at least in some areas. About half of the NFPs said that they regularly improve their data management practices. Less than half of the respondents said that their data management practices were standardized across all areas.

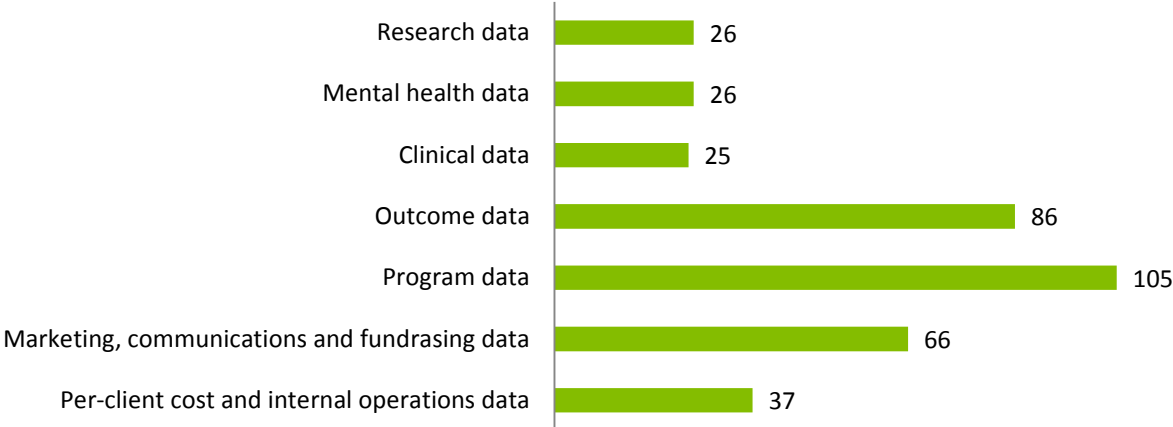
Which statements below best describe how your organization manages data? (N=114)



2.3. Type of data collected

The top three types of data collected by the NFP organizations are: (a) program data (e.g., number access to program, current status or issues, need assessment, service history and access); (b) outcome data (e.g., issues resolved, client condition post-service, success measurement); and (c) marketing, communications and fundraising data.

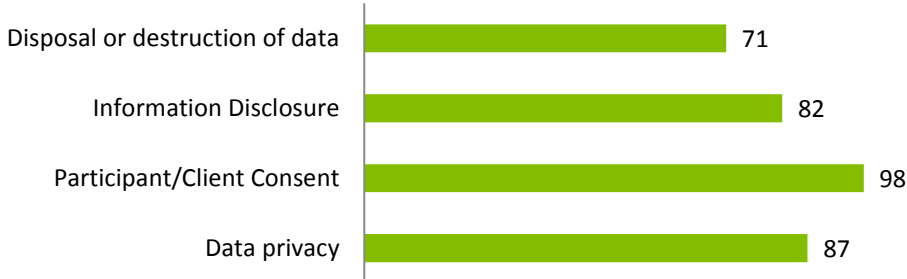
What type of data does your organization collect? (N=115)



2.4. Policies for data collected

Overall, most of the organizations have some policies in practice, including policies regarding client consent, data privacy, information disclosure, and disposal/destruction of data. Nine respondents did not select any of the options provided nor left any commentary about it.

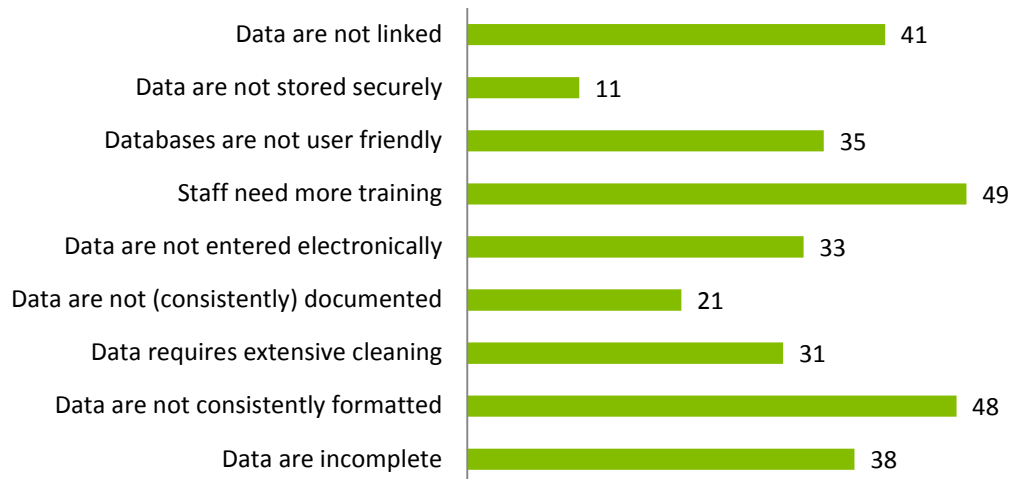
Does your organization have specific policies for data collected around the following? (N=106)



2.5. Challenges regarding data

The major challenges faced by the organizations regarding their data are: (a) lack of staff capacity; (b) difficulty to link data; and (c) the quality of the data collected – i.e., data are incomplete and/or are not consistently formatted.

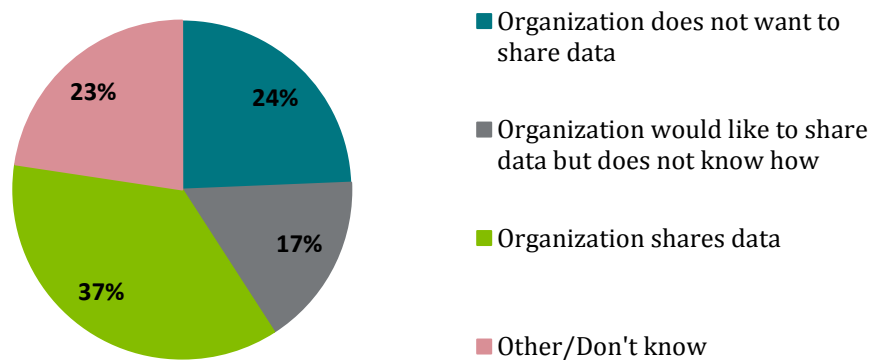
In your opinion, what are your organization's major challenges regarding its data? (N=100)



2.6. Attitude towards data sharing

Over 1/3 of the organizations seem to share data and have processes in place to do so; it is important to notice that data shared is not necessarily at the individual level. Around 1/4 of the agencies do not want to share data, which is mainly due to privacy concerns (see question 2.8 below).

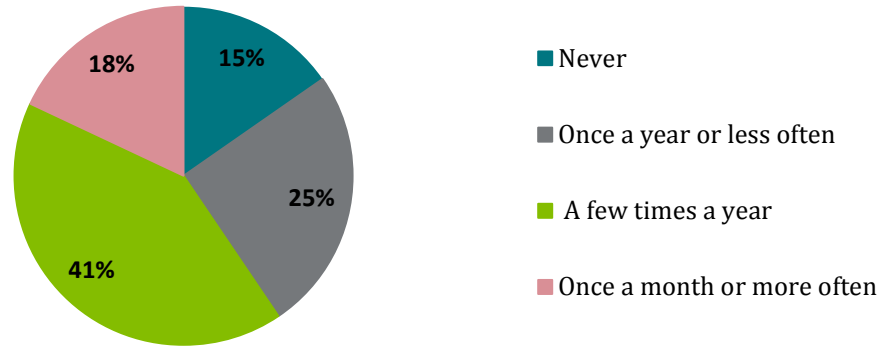
What is your organization's general attitude towards data sharing? (N=115)



2.7. Requests to share data

In general, over 2/3 of the NFP organizations receive requests to share data a few times a year or less. Only 15% of the respondents said that they have never received a request to share data with other organizations.

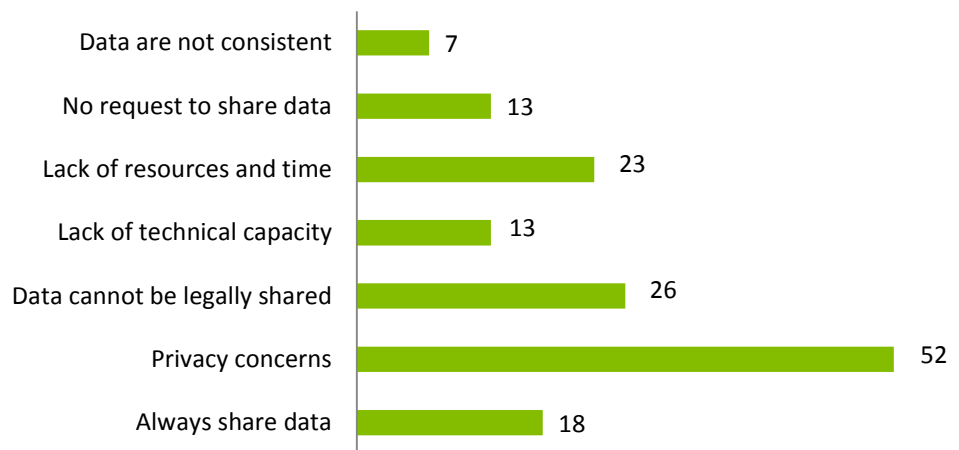
How often do you get requests to share data?? (N=111)



2.8. Reasons for not sharing data

The top three reasons why organizations do not share data are: (a) privacy concerns; (b) the fact that data cannot be legally shared; and (c) lack of resources and time. Aligned with this last finding is a lack of staff capacity, one of the biggest challenges facing the organizations in relation to their data management practices(see question 2.5 above).

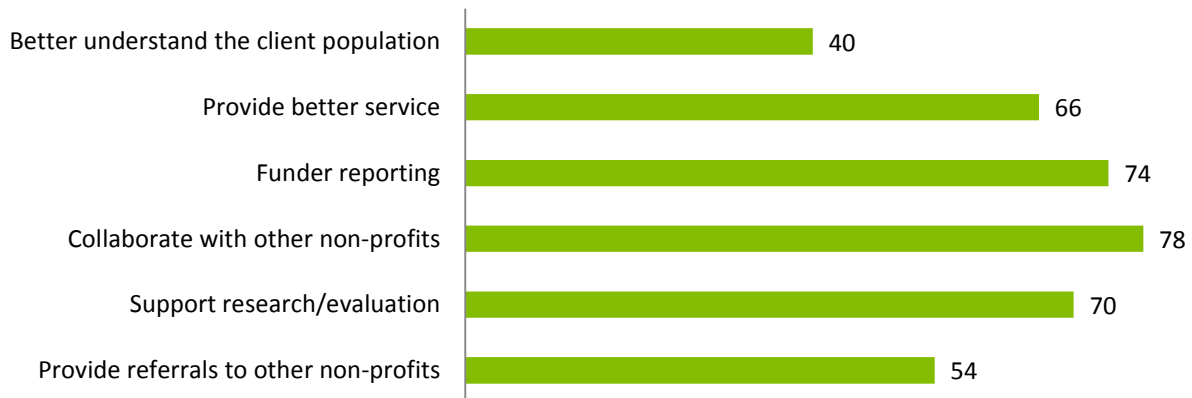
If your organization does not share data, why is that the case? (N=89)



2.9. Reasons for sharing data

Over half of the organizations will share data to collaborate with other NFPs on specific initiatives, to report to funders, to support research/evaluation, and/or to provide a better service.

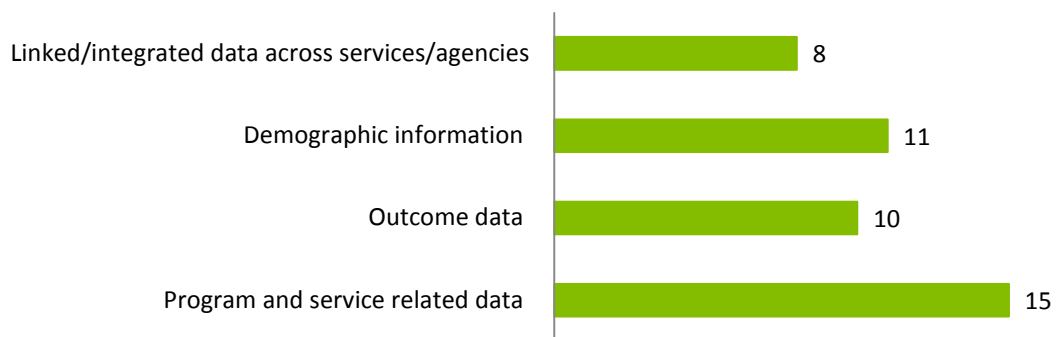
Choose the top three reasons that your organization would share data with other agencies. (N=114)



2.10. Data that would like to receive

In general, respondents mentioned that they would like to collect more program and service related data (e.g., number accessing programs, current status or issues, need assessment, service history and access), outcome data (e.g., issues resolved, client condition post-service, success measurement), and demographic information (ethnicity, language spoken, immigration status, culture background). A few respondents also mentioned that they would like to be able to link/integrate data across services and agencies (note that this was also an issue reported on question 2.5 above).

What data would you like to have on your client population that you currently do not have?"



3. Conclusion

In general, the majority of the organizations see data as an asset to inform funders, evaluate their own services, provide a better service, or collaborate with other organizations. However, challenges such as a lack of trained staff, inconsistent data format, unlinked or incomplete data, and difficulty using database systems are barriers to getting the most from their data. Importantly, despite these challenges and privacy concerns, the majority of NFPs share data or would like to do so.

The SAGE NFP survey will be administered periodically to monitor the state of the NFP sector and identify needs regarding data management and data sharing. Results will help PolicyWise for Children & Families focus efforts on helping NFP organizations make greater impact through optimized collection and use of data.

*We would like to thank all participants for taking the time to complete this survey. We truly value the information you have provided.



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