

Collaborate. Create. Accelerate.



Strengths of the Social Sector

DIVERSITY, COLLABORATION, AND COMMUNITY

Wasn't it five or six years ago that social, political, and economic trends impacting the sector seemed to herald a "new abnormal?" Little did we know how surreal our times would become! Today, fact and fiction seem to be turned on their heads, throwing into question our relationship to the truth and to one another — and rocking the very foundations of our social sector.

Colleagues throughout the field have sought to offer insights and guidance for how nonprofits and foundations can adapt, much of which rightly focuses on resilience, responsiveness, and flexibility. We would both agree with this analysis and offer these additional observations:

We are not the same. Each organization is experiencing current events in different ways. Some are working with clients in acute crisis or facing existential threats to their missions due to shifts in federal policy. For others, the challenge to preserve basic services for the most vulnerable is just the latest skirmish in a longstanding battle. A few have seen fundraising windfalls, though many struggle for visibility and support. At La Piana, we are seeing these differences influence how client organizations are approaching planning, their balance of short-term and long-term strategies, and their tolerance for risk in taking on new or unconventional endeavors.



We are in this together. Recognizing the strength in its diversity is one of the sector's greatest collective opportunities. Just as there is growing acknowledgement of the interconnection of social problems and the [intersectionality](#) of our work, coalition-building is creating the conditions for organizations to work across silos. Recent articles on [successful coalitions](#) and an [ecosystem view of leadership](#) highlight lessons being learned from this work, and resources like [The Power of Possibility](#) campaign are normalizing and elevating conversations about deep collaboration. Increasingly, our clients are looking outside their own organizations for opportunities to leverage complementary skills, assets, and capacities.

We are of the community. Nonprofits are mission-driven to serve the public good. Created by and for the community, they are at their best when deeply connected to their communities and their shared challenges and opportunities. It is this connectedness that makes the role of the social sector so critical. Across the sector, and among our clients, we are seeing organizations commit themselves anew to becoming better partners with communities to co-lead change efforts for social change.

Building on these strengths, nonprofits and foundations will not only weather the current storm but may well emerge as an even more vital thread in the social fabric holding our democracy together.

Collaboration Prize: Alliances Take Center Stage

2017 APPLICANT POOL DOMINATED BY CONSORTIA, COALITIONS, OTHER ALLIANCES

[AgeWell](#), a Pittsburgh-area program supporting independent living for seniors, has been named the winner of the 2017 Collaboration Prize. This year was the third round of the Prize, which was held first in 2009 and again in 2011. La Piana Consulting has worked with the [Lodestar Foundation](#) to manage the award process each round, observing with interest the evolution of the collaborative landscape.

[Jo DeBolt](#), Partner at La Piana, notes that the biggest change this year from rounds previous was the prominence of partnerships identifying as [alliances](#). In all, 66% of collaborations in the running for this year's prize (including AgeWell) featured some form of alliance — more than double in previous years.

[Click here or on the infographic to the right for more takeaways.](#)



News and Events

Exploring Greater Impact Through Collaboration: [The Dallas Foundation](#), [Lyda Hill Foundation](#), [Meadows Foundation](#), and [United Way of Metropolitan Dallas](#) have joined forces to launch the [Better Together Fund](#) to encourage and support nonprofits to explore formal, long-term collaborations as a way to maximize impact. The Fund will be launched at the Better Together Fund Summit in Dallas on June 7, organized in collaboration with La Piana Consulting. This half-day event will feature [Bob Harrington](#), Partner at La Piana, and guest speaker Anne Wallestad, President and CEO of [BoardSource](#).

National Charter Schools Conference: On June 13, [Makiyah Moody](#), Senior Consultant at La Piana, will co-present a session on governance at the [National Charter Schools Conference](#) in Washington, D.C. She will join Sarah Vandergriff, Legal and Policy Director of [Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools](#), in addressing "The Seven Deadly Sins of Charter School Boards." Find more information [here](#).

Our Team: La Piana Consulting is delighted to welcome **Kirby Zabala** to the firm. Kirby joins us in the role of Project and Office Assistant, partnering with consultants to provide support to client engagements and ensuring effective and efficient day-to-day operations at our administrative office. Please join us in welcoming Kirby to our team!

Resources

Grand St. Settlement Case Study: The full length case study featuring this dynamic, [100-year-old community organization's](#) strategy development and implementation journey is now available [here](#).

Turning the Tides on Persistent Rural Poverty: Don't miss [NeighborWorks America's](#) new [research on the challenges facing rural communities](#) and how we can work together to create greater opportunity.

Partnerships for Managed Care: Learn from [Meals on Wheels and Senior Outreach Services'](#) experience in [how to build relationships with healthcare providers](#) to improve client outcomes.

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