In Absence of Federal Funding, Communities and Business Must Support Nonprofits
(http://www.utahbusiness.com/absence-federal-funding-communities-business-must-support-nonprofits/)

Salt Lake City—With President Trump's first federal budget plan proposing the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, many in the local nonprofit communities scrambled to look at how their own balance sheets would look with those sources of funding running dry.

At the annual Utah Business nonprofits roundtable Thursday morning, held in downtown Salt Lake City's Holland & Hart offices, nearly a score of industry executives met to talk about the state of nonprofits in Utah, as well as what challenges and growth areas there seem to be ahead.

"There's so much uncertainty. We depend a great deal on federal funding," said Diane Hartz Warsoff, CEO of the Community Development Corporation of Utah, which helps residents become homeowners and receives funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. "That underwrites a lot of what we do. ... This funding has been creeping down over the years anyway. The key for us is being prepared now because we're not sure what it's going to look like."

With federal sources of funding uncertain, nonprofits have to look at their community for support. At this early stage, some nonprofits are finding their communities are up to the task.
“KRCL has fund drives primarily in the fall and spring and our most recent drive was our most successful ever. I do feel that that has everything to do with what's going on in Washington. We may lose the Corporation for Public Broadcasting money," Vicki Mann, executive director of 90.9FM KRCL, said. "We hired a director of philanthropy, which we’ve never had before, so that we can potentially make up the money that we will lose if the CPB money goes away. KRCL is an outlet for the voiceless, essentially. People feel that we’re an important institution in the market, and so they’ve really stepped up."

But as individuals’ concerns about more basic needs, like the economy or healthcare, rise, the attention (and funding) given to nonprofits may dwindle. Participation in culture and the arts may decrease, says Shandra Benito, executive director of Art Access.

“There is an increased sense of community within organizations ... We’re all kind of coming together in a way that’s a little more urgent," says Bonito. “There is a lot of fear within marginalized communities. ... There are a lot of fundamental needs that people are afraid about: housing, whether they’ll have healthcare next year. When that becomes unstable, it becomes a lot harder to engage in things like self-expression, to have high self-esteem, to be able to play."

It's here where businesses, which will be the beneficiaries of many of the Trump administrations' actions, need to step up, says Chris Conard, executive director for Playworks Utah.

"If [cuts to the arts, culture and education] will happen for a business-first policy [to flourish], then businesses are going to have to start reinvesting into the community, or the community is going to fail," he says. "It's good business to do good while doing well."

"Corporate philanthropy for cultural sector has really gone down the tubes, big time. We used to have stalwart corporate donors who aren't there anymore," adds Crystal Young-Otterstrom, executive director for the Utah Cultural Alliance. “Thankfully, that money has been replaced in a lot of other areas, but we would like to invite businesses to renew their investment in culture."

The roundtable was moderated by Kate Rubalcava, CEO of the Utah Nonprofits Association. Read the full conversation in the September Industry Outlook section of Utah Business.
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