
Albuquerque Community Foundation

Preliminary Organizational Diagnostic

ACF Board of Trustees | August 18, 2026



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COMMUNITY
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trust • equity • integrity • accountability



Overview of ACF strategy approach (June 2026 - February 2027)

	Phase One: Diagnostic & Landscape Scan (Jun – Sep 2026)	Phase Two: Strategic Framework (Sep – Dec 2026)	Phase Three: Organization Planning (Dec 2026 – Feb 2027)
Key work streams	Organizational Diagnostic - Explore opportunities and challenges across ACF's core work through organizational document review - Conduct interviews with key stakeholders to explore organizational strengths, challenges, and opportunities Landscape Scan - Interview community stakeholders to understand the policy, socioeconomic, and philanthropic context shaping ACF's work - Partner with a local consultant to engage residents and community members with lived experience and include their perspectives - Conduct literature and field review on key trends, best practices, and strategic implications for community foundations - Synthesize insights to identify ACF's distinctive role and highest-leverage opportunities	Intended Impacts & Strategic Priorities - Facilitate discussions with internal stakeholders to identify ACF's greatest opportunities for impact over the next five years - Define community-informed priority areas for more intentional focus of ACF's work and decision guide for priority-setting - Identify key strategies and partnerships to advance and deepen ACF's mission, and sharpen focus for the most meaningful impact Emerging Implications - Explore emerging implications for ACF's programs, philanthropic services, communications, and operations; assess feasibility of potential directions - Identify how the Foundation's 50th anniversary (2031) can be integrated into the strategic vision as a meaningful community milestone	Organization Implications - Assess programmatic and organizational implications of the refined strategy, including staffing, structure, systems, and governance - Identify high-level financial implications of the strategy, including areas where shifts in priorities may influence revenue - Define success measures to help ACF monitor and communicate progress against its strategic priorities Strategic Plan Synthesis - Synthesize findings and strategic choices and draft five-year strategic plan for refinement with leadership, staff, and the Board/Staff Working Group - Refine the plan based on feedback prior to final Board adoption
Key deliverables	- Board/Staff Working Group launch & engagement schedule - Diagnostic - Landscape scan	- Initial strategic framework (intended impacts, strategic priorities) - Present at Oct '26 Board meeting	- Program & organizational priorities - Financial projections - Strategic plan draft - Present exec sum. at Feb '27 Board meeting

Stakeholder Engagement

Roles	Activities	Estimated time commitment
Project/Leadership Team	Confirm and refine scope of work; provide input on key questions and emerging findings; provide feedback on project progress for alignment on strategic direction	1-2 hours weekly; additional time as needed
Staff Strategic Planning Group	Provide regular input and feedback throughout the engagement; review diagnostic and landscape findings; support alignment and buy-in across the organization	1–2 hours monthly for working sessions
Staff engagement	Provide input on organizational priorities and direction; share perspective on ACF’s opportunities and challenges	1:1 meetings, all staff meetings
Board Steering Committee	Provide input on priorities and organizational direction; shape and adopt the final strategic framework; participate in key milestone presentations	1:1 interviews, meetings every 4-6 months
Board engagement	Provide input on organizational priorities and direction; Share key insights on ACF’s unique strengths, impact, and opportunities for growth	1:1 interviews, full board meeting discussions
Donors, fundholders, nonprofit partners, grantees, and civic leaders	Share key insights on ACF’s unique strengths, impact, and opportunities for growth; provide input and feedback on findings	1:1 interviews; small group interviews; other involvement as appropriate
Residents and community members; with local consultant	Capture lived experience and community perspectives to inform strategic priority areas; partner and align with local consultant	Meetings with local consultant; other involvement as appropriate

Executive Summary: Initial Diagnostic Themes

1. **Impact:** Interviewees report ACF's greatest impact lies in connecting, vetting, and convening organizations and in the credibility it has built, although ACF's more tangible impacts may be harder to cite
2. **Strategic Direction:** Interviewees see ACF doing important work without a clear focus or public identity, and look to the plan to define where it concentrates, how it shows up, and how it holds its values
3. **Programs:** Interviewees say ACF's programs are becoming more focused on equity and community, deepening trust with grantees; that said, some shifts are perceived to strain some donor relationships
4. **Operations and Capacity:** According to interviewees, ACF is working to bring its staffing, systems, and culture into alignment with its present-day scale, after years of rapid growth
5. **Leadership and Governance:** Interviewees note a smooth leadership transition and an accomplished, engaged board sit alongside open questions about the board's regional makeup and the ACF/NMCT structure, as NMCT expands
6. **Economics:** ACF is in a financially strong position; going forward, interviewees question the durability of the model, the rationale for its endowment goal, and whether it is moving enough money into the community now

Impact

Interviewees point to ACF's role connecting and vetting organizations and its speed in a crisis as its most concrete and powerful impact, though the impact is difficult to measure

- **Stakeholders describe ACF as a trusted clearinghouse and effective convener that makes philanthropy easier across the community, especially in a crisis, when it pulls funders together quickly to move money fast**
- **Interviewees see ACF's credibility and standing in the region as a strategic asset it can build on**
- **Interviewees acknowledge that ACF needs a consistent way to track and demonstrate the outcomes of the foundation's work**

Strategic Direction

Interviewees describe important work happening without a clear focus or public identity, and look to the plan to define what ACF prioritizes, how visibly it shows up, how it holds its values, and how it brings community into the process

- **Interviewees point to strengthening the nonprofit sector as ACF's most distinctive opportunity, one that could help address concerns that the foundation is stretched too thin and in need of clearer priorities**
- **Several stakeholders describe ACF as effective for the organizations and donors already close to it, while still largely unknown by the broader public, pointing to under-used public relations and external communications as a barrier to attracting new resources**
- **Interviewees describe ACF quietly softening how it names its equity work under political and funder pressure, and question whether that is prudence or over-correction**

Programs

Interviewees describe ACF's programs becoming more focused on equity and community, deepening trust with grantees while straining some donor relationships

- **Interviewees generally describe ACF's shift to trust-based, donor-engaging models, including unrestricted grants and creative giving circles, as effective**
- **Interviewees describe ACF's deepening equity and community focus as landing well with grantees and community, while a few donor departures are seen as driven more by how the shift was communicated than by the substance itself**

Operations and Capacity

Interviewees describe an organization working to bring its operations (staffing, systems, and culture) into alignment with its current scale, after years of rapid growth

- **Interviewees consistently name ACF's people as one of its greatest strengths — a committed, mission-driven staff working in a collaborative culture that several say has noticeably improved**
- **Interviewees say ACF's institutional knowledge and processes are largely undocumented, but note that ACF is actively working to close the gap**
- **Stakeholders note that current staff capacity is constrained and cannot meet new expectations adequately without proactive planning and investments, such as training and support**

Leadership and Governance

Interviewees describe a smooth leadership transition and an accomplished, engaged board — and, as NMCT expands, question whether the board's structure and regional makeup fit where ACF is heading

- **Interviewees widely describe the leadership transition as smooth, eased by promoting a long-time ACF leader**
- **Interviewees describe the board as a significant asset: accomplished, engaged professionals who serve with continuity and bring deep expertise across business, government, and philanthropy**
- **Interviewees want a clear decision and communication about whether ACF and NMCT will ultimately operate as one organization, and hold differing views on the answer**
- **Interviewees note that, with all trustees based regionally, the board is not yet structured for NMCT's statewide ambitions; its composition, including a \$5,000 giving requirement, is perceived as a “live question”**

Economics

Interviewees see ACF as financially strong today, but question the durability of the model, the rationale for its endowment goal, and whether it is putting enough money to work in the community now

- **Interviewees see ACF as financially strong, built on disciplined management, solid markets, and a revenue base diversified through NMCT, which has become so central that they say the plan cannot be scoped to ACF without it**
- **Some interviewees question how long ACF's strong financial position will last, noting that growth has leaned on volatile NMCT revenue, strong markets, and estate gifts, rather than a durable donor base**
- **The \$200M endowment goal draws consistent skepticism from several interviewees, who describe it as internally driven and not well-justified**
- **Interviewees perceive that grantees and community organizations want ACF to move more money into the community now rather than accumulate resources for the future**