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Paper Title: Infrastructure Leaders: What We Want and Need from Researchers

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Summary of Research

A discussion of what national nonprofit and foundation infrastructure leaders would like to see from academic researchers, how they think research might be more useful and timely on the issues that concern them, and how infrastructure groups and researchers might better collaborate in framing and implementing a consequential research agenda.

Description

As evinced by ARNOVA's choice of this annual conference's theme, the nonprofit sector faces a set of profound challenges in the realms of practice and policy arising from a shift in prevailing political ideology and in the economy. Research can help nonprofits and foundations better understand and manage their response to those changes both as individual entities and as a sector. Research also might have better helped charity leaders to anticipate, perhaps even moderate, the impact of these dynamics as they began to affect them.

This colloquy will explore ways leaders from the "nonprofit sector infrastructure organizations" believe that research and researchers might better have served, and might better serve, these groups in addressing the challenges they face. While no one would suggest that findings ought to be shaped to conform to and affirm organizational mission, there is among some a sense that research might hold greater value and import for the sector's leadership if had better reflected and addressed organizational priorities and agenda, and had it been framed in a way to hold greater implication for practice.

Individuals who serve in the leadership of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, Council on Foundations, Independent Sector, and the National Council of Nonprofit Associations will participate in this session. They will help explore ways in which these groups might collaborate with the research community to identify areas of contemporary research interest and import, and to shape questions that might inform inquiry.

The colloquy, following brief presentations, will turn to a facilitated dialogue among the infrastructure leaders and conference participants.