

2013

# Richmond Children First

Collaboration Self-Assessment



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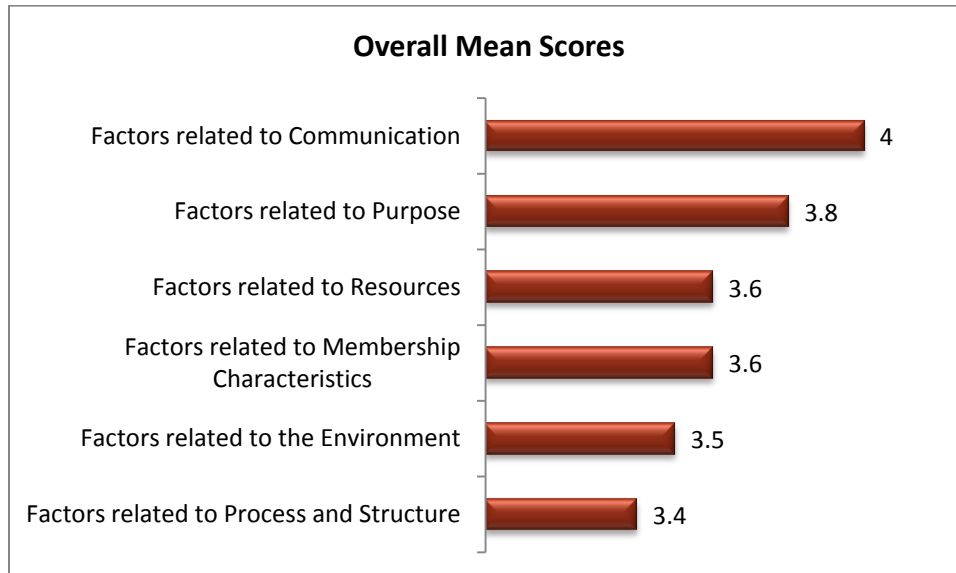
## Summary

In December, 2012, 20 members of the Richmond Children First Steering Committee were invited to complete an online version of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory, with a view to assessing the level of collaboration within the group and how it might be improved. 19 of the 20 members contacted completed the Inventory.

The Inventory gathers information in areas that have been shown to influence the success of collaborations formed by non-profit organizations, government agencies and others. These factors are grouped into six categories: Communication; Purpose; Resources; Membership Characteristics; Environment and Process & Structure.

The results were calculated as mean scores. The highest mean score possible is 5.0.

As the following chart demonstrates, the group scored highest in factors related to Communication and lowest in factors related to Process and Structure.



The Inventory does not have normative standards that enable one to construct definitive interpretations of numerical scores for the factors. Instead, scores can be used as a basis for constructive discussion and planning for an initiative.

Some things to consider when reviewing the results:

**What are the strengths and weaknesses of the group?** The scores can serve as a relative indicator of readiness to collaborate. Consider the three or four highest rated factors; these may represent strengths that the group can draw on to sustain collaboration, even in the face of major challenges. Similarly, the three or four lowest rated factors may represent problem areas that the group may wish to address.

**Do representatives from all organizations tend to rate the factors in the same way?** If not, what are the implications? If possible, look not just at the scores as rated by the total group, but also at scores as rated by individuals. If there are variances, the group should ask why these exist.

Sometimes an organization that sees things differently can provide valuable insights to the rest of the group. Or, an organization or individual that sees factors very differently from other partners may be having trouble participating, or may be “out of the loop” for important communications and does not understand what is going on.

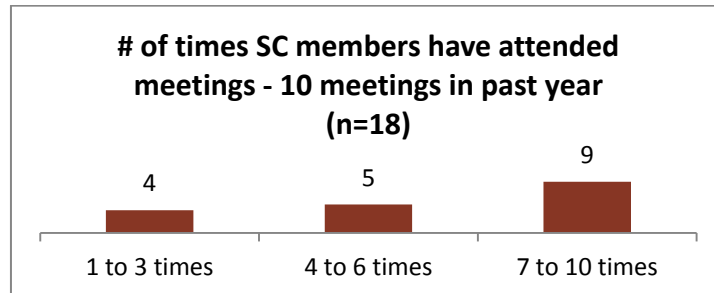
**For low-rated factors, are there particular items that are especially problematic?** It may be helpful to examine responses for individual items within each factor. When individual items are problematic, it will be more efficient and effective to remedy the specific deficiency, rather than attempt to improve the standing on the general factor.

### **How strong are the scores overall?**

Scores on the Inventory are not an absolute reflection of a group’s ability to collaborate effectively. However, they can be used as a basis for common sense judgements about how to proceed.

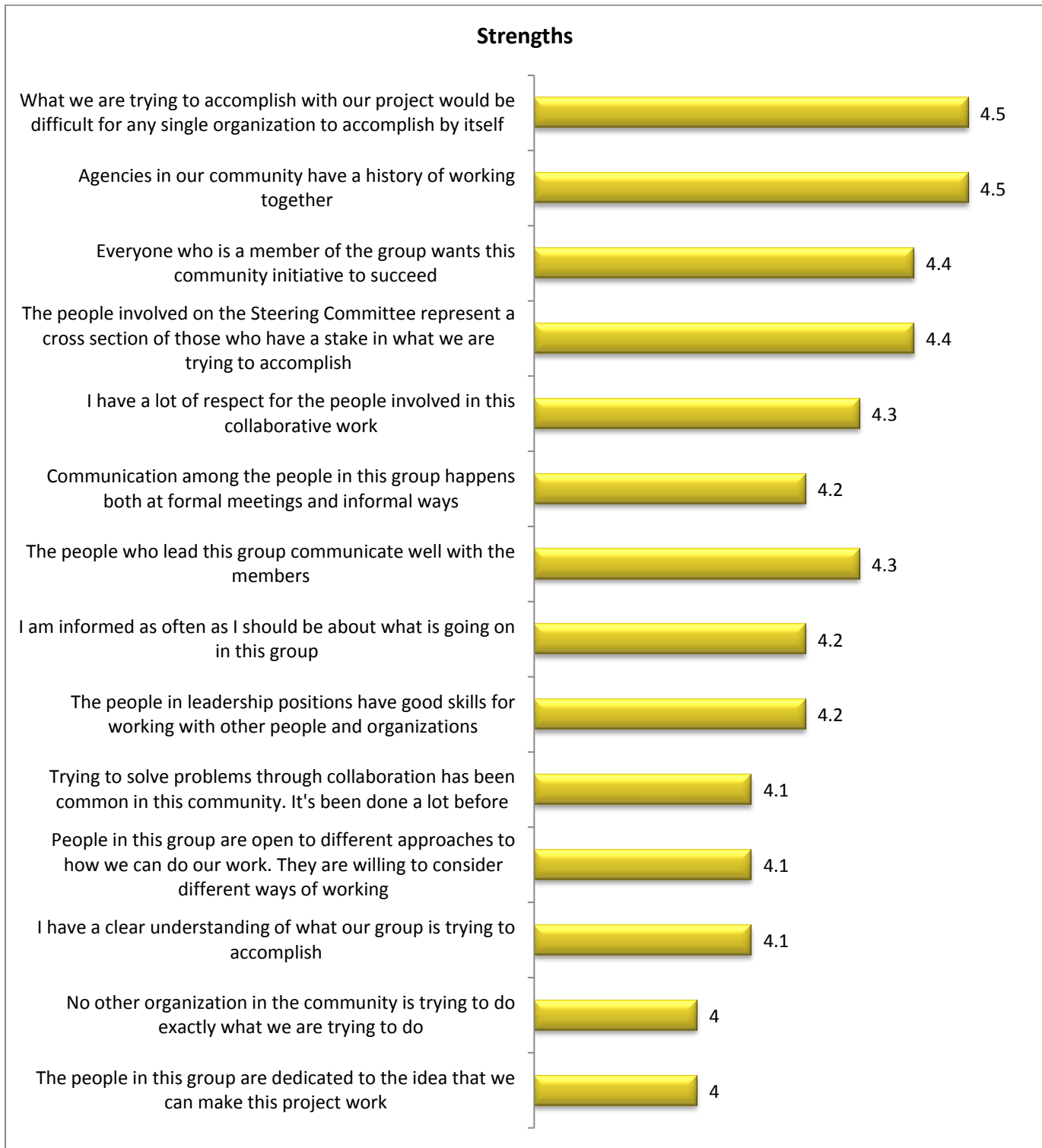
## **Meeting Attendance**

Prior to answering Inventory questions, respondents were asked to indicate how many times they had attended meetings that had taken place over the past year and it appears that about half of the members regularly attend. This may have some significance to the group and may factor in to some of the responses to Inventory questions.



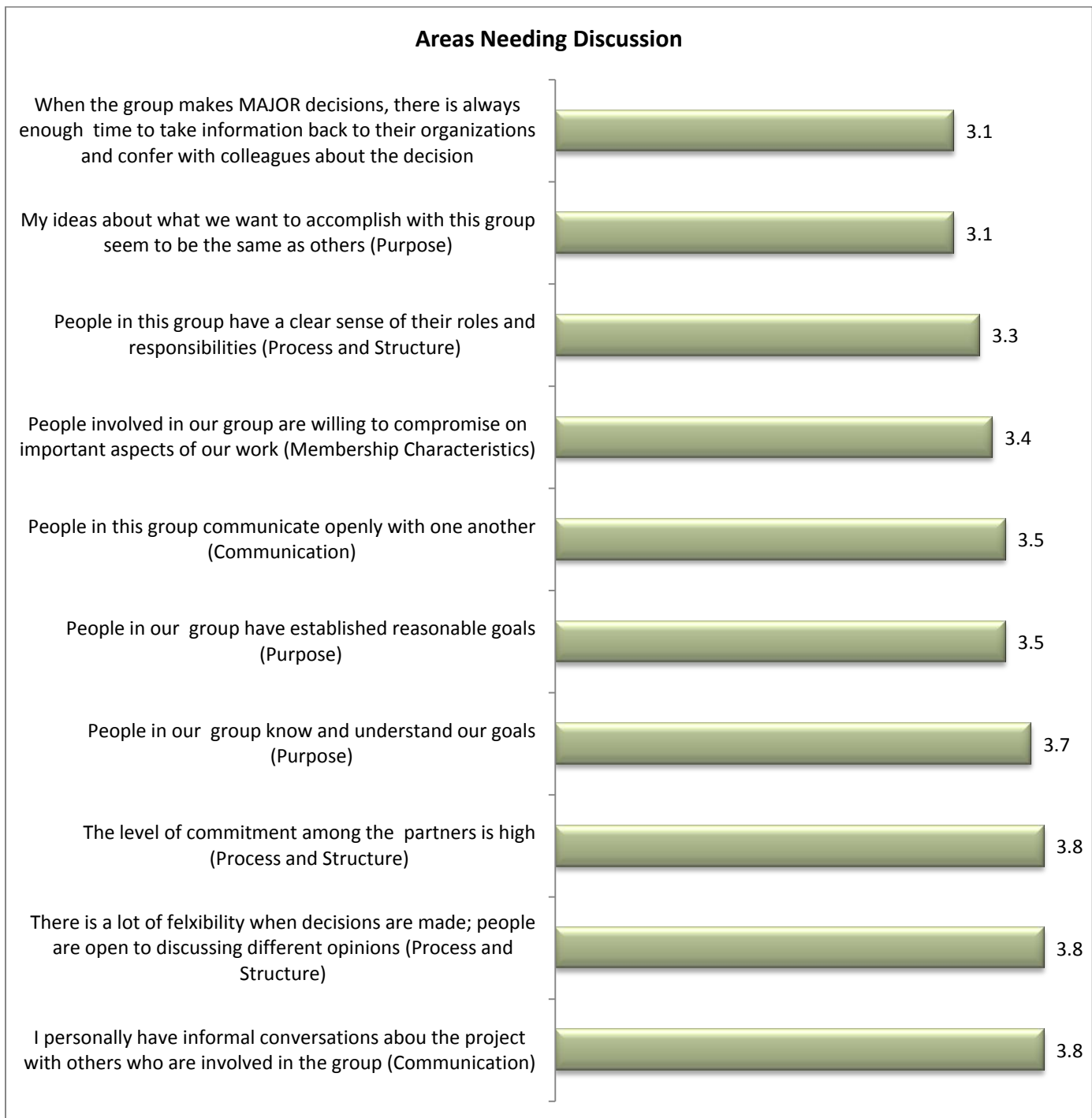
## Strengths:

As a general rule, the Wilder Instrument documentation indicates that scores of 4.0 or higher show strengths and probably don't need special attention. The results of this administration of the Inventory instrument show a significant number of strengths – and these can provide a foundation for work in areas that do need some attention.



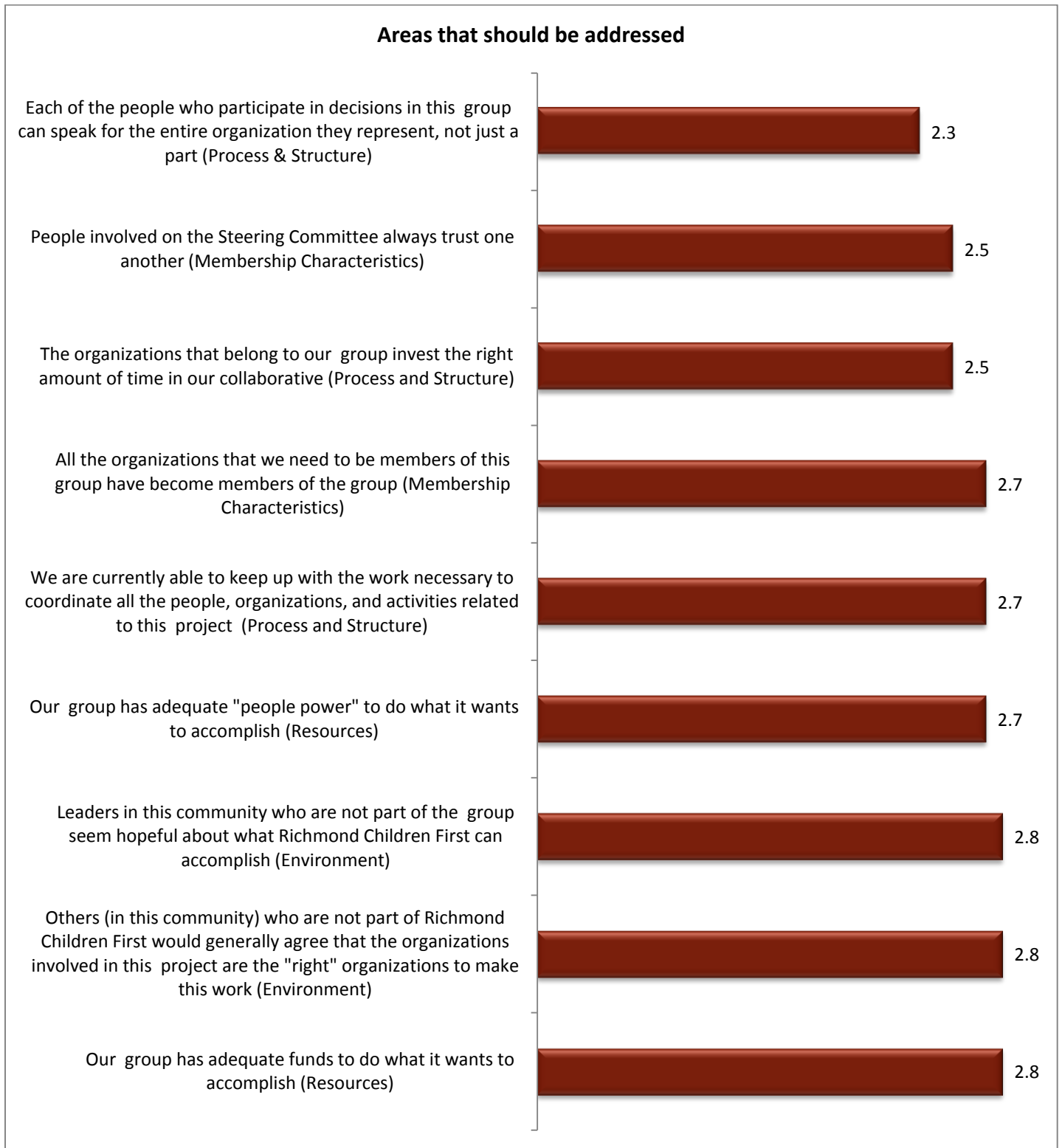
## Areas Needing some Discussion

Scores of 3.0 – 3.9 are considered to be borderline and the Wilder documentation suggests that items in this category should be discussed by the group - to see if they deserve attention.



## Areas that should be addressed

The Wilder documentation indicates that scores of 2.9 or lower reveal a concern and should be addressed as soon as possible.



## Detailed Results

The following tables detail the ratings within each category. These more detailed results may be helpful when determining why rating of a particular factor was low and what action should be taken. For example, where an item has been affected downwardly by “don’t know” answers, the action required may be quite different to if the item was affected by “strongly disagree”.

### Factors related to the Environment

- a. History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
- b. Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community
- c. Favorable political and social climate.

| Answer Options  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Agencies in our community have a history of working together.   | 0                 | 0        | 0                   | 9     | 10             | 0          | 4.5            |
| Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It's been done a lot before.  | 0                 | 0        | 0                   | 13    | 5              | 1          | 4.1            |
| Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what Richmond Children First can accomplish.   | 0                 | 2        | 5                   | 6     | 2              | 4          | 2.8            |
| Others (in this community) who are not part of Richmond Children First would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work. | 0                 | 0        | 4                   | 9     | 1              | 5          | 2.8            |
| <b>Overall rating</b>   |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>3.5</b>     |



## Factors related to membership characteristics

- a. Mutual respect, understanding and trust
- b. Appropriate cross section of members
- c. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
- d. Ability to compromise.

| Answer Options  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| People involved on the Steering Committee always trust one another  | 0                 | 3        | 10                  | 3     | 0              | 3          | 2.5            |
| I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration work  | 0                 | 0        | 2                   | 8     | 8              | 0          | 4.3            |
| The people involved on the Steering Committee represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish | 0                 | 0        | 0                   | 11    | 8              | 0          | 4.4            |
| All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group                         | 0                 | 5        | 4                   | 6     | 1              | 3          | 2.7            |
| My organization benefits from being involved in this collaboration  | 0                 | 0        | 1                   | 10    | 8              | 0          | 4.4            |
| People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our work.                                      | 0                 | 0        | 3                   | 10    | 3              | 3          | 3.4            |
| <b>Overall rating</b>   |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>4.4</b>     |

## Factors related to process and structure

- a. Members share a stake in both process and outcome
- b. Multiple layers of participation
- c. Flexibility
- d. Development of clear goals and policy guidelines
- e. Adaptability
- f. Appropriate pace of development

| Answer Options  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts   | 0                 | 6        | 4                   | 6     | 0              | 3          | 2.5            |
| Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this community initiative to succeed  | 0                 | 0        | 2                   | 7     | 10             | 0          | 4.4            |
| The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high  | 0                 | 0        | 4                   | 14    | 1              | 0          | 3.8            |
| When the collaborative group makes MAJOR decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues | 0                 | 3        | 4                   | 10    | 0              | 2          | 3.1            |
| Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part                     | 0                 | 5        | 4                   | 5     | 0              | 4          | 2.3            |
| There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options  | 0                 | 2        | 2                   | 13    | 2              | 0          | 3.8            |
| People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working                 | 0                 | 2        | 0                   | 12    | 5              | 0          | 4.1            |
| People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities   | 0                 | 1        | 5                   | 10    | 1              | 2          | 3.3            |
| There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration  | 0                 | 1        | 5                   | 12    | 0              | 1          | 3.4            |
| This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership                    | 0                 | 1        | 1                   | 11    | 4              | 1          | 3.8            |
| This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals                           | 0                 | 0        | 1                   | 11    | 5              | 2          | 3.8            |
| This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace  | 0                 | 3        | 3                   | 7     | 3              | 3          | 3.1            |
| We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project            | 0                 | 3        | 2                   | 10    | 0              | 4          | 2.7            |
| <b>Overall Rating</b>   |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>3.4</b>     |

## Factors related to communication

- a. Open and frequent communication
- b. Established informal relationships and communication links

| Answer Options  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another  | 0                 | 3        | 4                   | 11    | 1              | 0          | 3.5            |
| I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration                                       | 0                 | 0        | 3                   | 10    | 6              | 0          | 4.2            |
| The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members                                      | 0                 | 1        | 0                   | 11    | 7              | 0          | 4.3            |
| Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways     | 0                 | 0        | 3                   | 10    | 6              | 0          | 4.2            |
| I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group | 0                 | 4        | 1                   | 9     | 5              | 0          | 3.8            |
| <b>Overall Rating</b>   |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>4.0</b>     |

## Factors related to purpose

- a. Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
- b. Shared vision
- c. Unique purpose

| Answer Options   | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish   | 0                 | 1        | 4                   | 7     | 7              | 0          | 4.1            |
| People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals  | 0                 | 0        | 4                   | 12    | 2              | 1          | 3.7            |
| People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals  | 0                 | 0        | 2                   | 14    | 1              | 2          | 3.5            |
| The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.                                   | 0                 | 0        | 2                   | 15    | 2              | 0          | 4.0            |
| My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.                          | 0                 | 1        | 4                   | 10    | 1              | 3          | 3.1            |
| What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself | 0                 | 0        | 0                   | 10    | 9              | 0          | 4.5            |
| No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do  | 0                 | 0        | 3                   | 9     | 6              | 1          | 4.0            |
| <b>Overall Rating</b>  |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>3.8</b>     |

## Factors related to resources

- a. Sufficient funds, staff, materials and time
- b. Skilled leadership

| Answer Options   | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral, no opinion | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know | Rating Average |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Our collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish   | 0                 | 4        | 3                   | 7     | 1              | 3          | 2.8            |
| Our collaborative group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish                                      | 0                 | 7        | 2                   | 8     | 0              | 2          | 2.7            |
| The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations | 0                 | 1        | 1                   | 11    | 6              | 0          | 4.2            |
| <b>Overall Rating</b>  |                   |          |                     |       |                |            | <b>3.6</b>     |