

INCREASING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS TO END POVERTY FOR HOMELESS SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

Economic Empowerment Case Study

CLIENT SITUATION

The non-profit client sets impoverished single-parent families on the path to self-sufficiency using a two-generational (known in the non-profit world as '2Gen') model focusing on affordable housing, adult life skills, and early childhood development. Residents are low-income single-parent families; the parents must be motivated to change and grow in order to be accepted into the program. Affordable housing is provided via a dedicated apartment building owned by the non-profit. Residents pay a set percentage of their income as rent and the typical stay is 12-36 months, at which point they will have progressed towards self-sufficiency and can move on to more permanent housing.

The health of the core adult self-sufficiency program had not been assessed in over 20 years. North Highland stepped in to conduct a detailed program assessment by answering several key questions:

- How does the adult self-sufficiency program operate today? What is working well, and where are there pain points?
- How does the model compare to other 2Gen programs, both locally and nationally?
- What aspects of the program should be maintained and amplified, and what barriers must be overcome in order to scale the model?

Denver's population has grown by over 100,000 residents since 2010. This rapid growth has increased demand for housing, raising average rents and making Denver's lowest income residents even more vulnerable. The Denver Housing Authority estimates the population of extremely low-income renter households is more than three times the number of affordable units. Denver's non-profit community is working hard to help these at-risk families weather the changes happening in the city. Our client is among those non-profits creating measurable and sustainable impact for these most vulnerable families.

OUR APPROACH

The North Highland team used strategy and core consulting capabilities, and leveraged Process Improvement, Data & Analytics, and People & Change tools to conduct a current state analysis and help answer questions. We also identified a number of pain points: challenges in accessing the data needed to make timely interventions for residents, a lack of knowledge sharing causing variation in applicant assessments and best practice usage, and staff capacity constraints that complicated prioritizing the most impactful work. To build additional context, we interviewed leaders from six peer 2Gen organizations, and compared organizational profiles, value chains, and success metrics.

VALUE DELIVERED

Ultimately, we synthesized the current state analysis, peer analysis, and additional research to generate a set of six high-level recommendations:

- 1 Refine the program vision and build out the program playbook
- 2 Prioritize and focus on the things that matter most
- 3 Use data to build towards evidence-based programming
- 4 Improve the post-program transition
- 5 Enhance and structure knowledge sharing
- 6 Further empower residents and alumni to help themselves and each other

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For each recommendation, we outlined low, medium, and high intensity tactical options to make the recommendations actionable. Although final decisions on recommendation prioritization are still underway, we also developed a detailed roadmap template to guide future implementation efforts. The client is now positioned to address their current state gaps and prepare for future growth.

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ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a global management consulting firm known for helping clients solve their most complex challenges related to customer experience, performance improvement, technology and digital, and transformation. We add value and support our clients across the full spectrum of consulting, from strategy through delivery. We bring the big ideas, then we make them real.

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