

DESIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY TO SCALE POSITIVE IMPACT FOR VETERANS

Philanthropy Case Study – Charlotte

CLIENT SITUATION

The non-profit client serves as a convener of veteran service needs. It coordinates a wide range of services such as housing, employment, community engagement, mental/behavioral health, food assistance, family support, and education in partnership with over 60 service providers (e.g., Goodwill, Salvation Army) and over 200 employers in the Charlotte metropolitan area. In 2018, the client received 3,300 service requests and impacted nearly 1,400 veteran families, with more than half of the requests related to housing and employment.

The organization has grown considerably since inception. In the past year, it served more veterans and military families than similar VSOs in 15 other metropolitan areas across the country. To continue to serve more veterans and their families, the client engaged North Highland, a leading change and transformation firm, to assess its ability to expand its footprint within and beyond the Charlotte metropolitan area.




Studies show nearly 70 percent of veterans experience transition stress upon leaving the military due to difficulties finding employment, housing, and a new network of friends. This puts veterans at risk of a less successful civilian career and at disproportionate risk of entering poverty. In 2018, there were approximately 148,000 total veterans in the greater Charlotte and surrounding areas, including 9,000 at-risk, unemployed, and/or homeless veterans. Our pro-bono client is the leading Veterans Services Organization (VSO) in Charlotte, helping veterans and their families smoothly transition to civilian life. North Highland served as a change and transformation consulting firm in this pro-bono engagement to help focus and mobilize the VSO's growth objective of serving more veterans and empowering the community to join them.

OUR APPROACH

Built over the course of an eight-year partnership, North Highland brought its Managed Services to the client with an understanding of its culture, people, and strategic priorities. We knew that the client needed a stable, embedded delivery partner with a proven track record for quality execution. It needed to move to a more agile, iterative way of delivering its key programs while mitigating the cost of reliance on multiple suppliers.

Through its Managed Services solution, North Highland has empowered the organization with the benefit of flexibility. We first brought a dependable, scalable, high-performance workforce in Business Analysis and, due to the success of the partnership, the client later expanded the Managed Service to include Project Management roles.

Operating in a climate that commands increasingly agile innovation and product delivery, the client can tap into a resource pool with the right blend of skills, enabling projects to be quickly ramped up and delivered into early life support—all without compromising on cost and quality. There are several key elements that continue to differentiate the Managed Services partnership:

-  What progress has the client made in driving impact?
-  Is this a differentiated model from other VSOs in the region?
-  Which elements in the value chain should be amplified and what barriers must be overcome to grow impact and scale?

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VALUE DELIVERED

We articulated four focused opportunities that played to the client's strengths and powered its growth objectives:

- Strengthening marketing capabilities by focusing on service differentiation and value articulation
- Expansion of a recently established program that trains volunteers to serve as ambassadors of the organization within the community
- Geographic expansion beyond the Charlotte metropolitan region through intentional partnerships with regional VSOs and communities
- Business network growth by developing professional relationships in Charlotte and strengthening collaboration with Veteran Employee Resource Groups

For each opportunity, we developed realization paths and built growth models to quantify the investment and impact with conservative, likely, and optimistic outcomes charted over a five-year period. Partnering with our client in a day-long prioritization workshop that convened 15 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, we aligned on current state challenges, future state needs, and growth opportunities. The engagement resulted in a backlog of prioritized work that phased delivery over three growth horizons:

- **Six months:** Strengthening of mission
- **6-12 months:** Building and scaling in the Carolinas
- **12-24 months:** Engaging and expanding locally and regionally

The resulting roadmap established an actionable path forward for the client to improve and scale its impact on the veteran community.

As part of North Highland's continued aim to build long-term philanthropy value focused on economic empowerment – rooted in our belief that the most impactful work occurs through long-term client partnership to disrupt root causes of poverty – we will be working with this client over the course of the next year.

ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a leading change and transformation consulting firm, recognized for its deep expertise and collaborative, action-oriented approach. Invested in our **client's success** and powered by the belief that **everything begins and ends with people**, we bring together the brightest minds to create **positive change** and **transform businesses** through **customer, workforce and operational** lenses.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., and regularly named a best place to work, North Highland is an employee-owned firm with more than 5,000 consultants worldwide and 70+ offices around the globe. The firm is a member of Cordence Worldwide (www.cordenceworldwide.com), a global management consulting alliance. For more information, visit northhighland.com and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).