

Examples of Excellence Presented at 2017 Best Practices Workshop

Brooklyn Community Services

www.WeAreBCS.org

Brooklyn Community Services' mission is to empower at-risk children, youth and families, and adults with mental illness or developmental disabilities to overcome the obstacles they face, as we strive to ensure opportunity for all to learn, grow and contribute to ONE Brooklyn Community.

Year Founded: 1866 | **Budget:** \$29,643,176 | **FT Staff:** 250 | **PT Staff:** 375

Volunteers: 800 | **Board Members:** 18

President/Executive Director: Marla Simpson | **Board Chair:** David O'Connell

Overall Management Focus on Results and Impact

- Nurturing culture of data; training of senior staff on data management and staff on outcomes thinking.
- Tracking mix of outputs and outcomes:
 - Getting good outcome results (in those cited); reviewing regularly and discussing with staff; embarking on new study of Structural Family Therapy model with partners.
- A comprehensive approach to services in their community and adapting to changing community needs.
- Development of appropriate tools to track and to assess impact and investment in improving those tools and their implementation with collaboration between finance and programs staff.
 - Desire for "proof of concept" when scaling services.

Governance Structure Moves the Organization Forward

- Actively seeking new board members that fit and support new vision.
 - The organization utilizes diverse pathways such as outreach fairs to locate new board prospects with success.
- Engaged Board leverages expertise to support organization with new strategy and marketing & branding campaign.
- Internal audit program developed with input of CPA firm, which conducts an annual review on selected topics
 - Internal risk management protocols around reporting, review, disaster planning with participation of Board, management, and staff.
- Established an internal compliance position, upgrading it in 2013 to the senior level, as General Counsel/Chief Compliance Officer.

Financial Management is Strong, Transparent and Accountable

- After economic challenges, extremely thoughtful and difficult decisions were made around staffing that empowered mid-level managers, leveraging of real estate, closing a longstanding program, and moving programs more into communities they served.
- Improved budgeting process; able to adjust when changes occur and includes line managers in budgeting while increasing transparency across finance functions.
- Board members led the way with planning sessions and staff focus groups (and the use of consumer satisfaction measures) in order to align budgeting with a new strategic plan.
- Outsourced accounting and claiming services yielding savings and an improvement in forecasting capabilities.

Organization is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive

- Shifting paradigm from provide to empower while engaging clients in feedback about new direction.
- Engaging with new populations and offering new programs such as expanded services for NYCHA residents, for disconnected youth, including youth with disabilities, and for young fathers.
 - Done through a new lens of changed demographics in Brooklyn and seeing themselves as part of the Brooklyn community in all its diversity.

- Diversity of staff (including increasing senior leadership). Staff is diverse at all levels and represent the communities served.
 - 2/3 of staff live in the specific communities BCS serves.
 - Multilingual staff speak Russian, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Urdu and American Sign Language.

Human Resources are Valued and Developed

- Utilize technology to connect staff across different sites via meetings, events, forums and newsletters.
- Each year there are multiple rounds of merit increases to recognize high-performing staff and equity adjustments and to address internal disparities.
- Strong use of volunteers as pipeline for staff and board positions.
- Succession planning within departments to build bench of leaders and ensure knowledge transfer

Use of Information Technology Systems Improves Efficiency and Advances Mission

- Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel/Chief Compliance Officer lead an initiative to build cross-program data management capability.
- Internal work group oversees infrastructure to ensure compliance with practice standards, billing, and other requirements.
- Secured a \$50K grant to expand staff ability to effectively employ mobile technology in programs.
- Train the trainer, training program in logic model/data collection.

Communications are Strategic, Effective, and Build Brand

- Messaging is clearly connected to mission and uses community members and volunteers as a way to amplify message and garner more support.
- Focused on connecting with a Brooklyn audience (e.g. ONE Brooklyn, Brooklyn Stand Up, Community Walks, and Spring Into Action campaigns).
 - BCS is seen as outgrowth of the community and not a provider. It makes a huge difference in message, staff commitment, and neighborhood involvement.
- Effectively incorporate organizational values into messaging
 - Website and stories illustrate the organization's stories in an effective way.
 - Social media stands out for a local community based service organization.
- Deliberate leveraging of the volunteer program and events as ambassadorship/marketing opportunities to grow volunteer pool.

Fundraising and Resource Development are Strategic, Donor-Center, and Effective

- Comprehensive, integrated fundraising approach that aligns with mission and frames client stories as empowerment.
- Targeted stewardship for different donor pools with cultivation of volunteers.
- Mindful that fundraising needs/trends are changing, so need to adapt and doing so; using new program focus and marketing campaign to secure new funders.
- Experimenting with new types of low-dollar fundraising, placing more emphasis on broad, inclusive events that build grassroots support instead of merely an annual gala and year-end mailing.