

*Spring 2007 Pilot Engagement Summary:***Hilda's Place Transitional Shelter, Connections for the Homeless***Community Analysts:*

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**Objective:** To determine Hilda's key strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and develop an action plan to address these issues.

**Challenge:** Strengthen internal and external communication and organizational operations

**Process:** Weeks 1 – 3: Problem identification and due diligence  
Weeks 3 – 6: Stakeholder interviews and “best practices” research  
Weeks 6 – 9: Analysis and development of deliverables  
Week 10: Final presentation

**Findings:** 4 Programmatic Needs Identified

1. Adequate training and orientation for case managers
2. Database of community resources and reference sheets
3. Formalized “plan for success” for residents
4. Clear channels of communication and formalized external linkages

**Deliverables:**

- Case Manager Training: provided *Case Management Services Curriculum*, developed by Center for Urban Community Services and the Corporation for Supportive Housing and recommended specific adaptations for Hilda's Place
- “Go-To” Guides: provided Evanston-specific resource guides for Housing and Employment issue areas; recommended a resource log and provided templates for replication
- “Plan for Success” for HP residents: provided Deborah's Place *Social Services Interview Form*, *Case Management Services Curriculum*, *CEP Housing Plan*, and *Covenant House Rights of Passage* documents; recommended specific adaptations for Hilda's Place
- Internal Communication: created Hilda's Place organizational chart with job descriptions; recommended standardization of protocol, beginning with Resident Contract
- External Communication: created analyses of top 4 housing and employment referrals, identifying synergies between Hilda's Place and targeted social service organizations; created template Referral Document; initiated conversations between Hilda's Place and targeted organizations

**Feedback:** Post-engagement evaluation surveys were distributed to Community Analysts and nonprofit personnel directly involved in the Spring Engagement. Follow-up discussions were conducted in-person and via phone to expand upon survey responses.

Nonprofit Feedback:

*Regarding quality of engagement and recommendations:* “You guys are so professional. You listened to the circumstances and what happens here at this agency, the problems. What you guys offered me was right on.”

*Regarding implementation of recommendations:* “I think for me it’s trying to find the time to focus less on direct service and more on programming. I’ve been taking bits and pieces of the supportive housing training to improve the entire system. It’s implementation and that’s where I struggled, but what you went through was right on.”

*Regarding length of engagement:* “The engagement length was appropriate to the goals of the program, allowing the team sufficient time to gather evidence and develop recommendations.”

*Regarding communication and accessibility of team members:* “The updates were spot on. The weekly updates...ensured I knew where the team was and that we were able to communicate needs to each other. The team members were very accessible. It was a pleasure to work with campusCATALYST! “

Student Feedback

*Regarding necessary training:* “I think that my experience with NSP and other volunteer organizations, along with classes I took that involved consulting-like experiences were very beneficial. Many people will not have those experiences, or may have others that would be helpful, but I think that a basic training in the process of consulting is essential.”

*Regarding nonprofit experience:* “It was a great experience...I thought I knew how the organization worked, but getting that closer look at the operations and “backstage” goings-on of the group was eye opening. Meeting one-on-one with Becky and Kevin was really great, because they were so willing to help us and be involved with the process every step of the way.”

*Regarding consulting project:* “I think that we found that a tighter structure and timeline would be very beneficial, along with a larger idea of the final product to help us backward plan as we dealt with Hilda’s.”

**Key Takeaways to guide Fall 2007 Pilot Engagements:**

- Provide students with trainings on both the basics of consulting and the nonprofit sector
- Create project contracts detailing the scope of the project and the expected outcomes
- Focus on fewer deliverables. Instead of quantity, improve quality. The goal is to move recommendations closer to an executable implementation stage to ensure that nonprofits are able to fully utilize analysis of consulting engagement.