Overcoming Common Barriers to Self-Sufficiency: How We Help Our Customers

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Agenda

• About UPO
• Notions of Poverty
• Common Barriers to Self-Sufficiency
• Case Studies
• Overview of Effective Interventions
ABOUT US

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About the United Planning Organization

- Private nonprofit human service corporation
- Established on December 10, 1962
- Established via gifts from both Ford and Meyer Foundation grants
- Corporate mission: plan, coordinate, and implement human service programs in the Nation's Capital
- Became the designated community action agency for Washington, D.C. in 1964
About the United Planning Organization

• Governed by a 21-member board of directors
  » a third are elected by DC residents
  » a third are appointed by the Mayor of DC
  » a third are elected by the board

• CSBG and Head Start funding account for 80% of funding

• 53,711 DC residents served in FY 2015

• Operating budget in FY 2015 ~ $36M

• Staffed by 300+ personnel

• Operates 40+ community based programs
About the United Planning Organization

• Funds 7 CSBG sub grant recipients
  • average funding of $300,000 per agency
• Operates 24 early childhood development sites
• Funds 5 delegate ECDCs agencies
  • total funding of $9M
• Awards five $10,000 scholarships to five low-income District of Columbia students annually
Organization: Programmatic Divisions

- Adult Education Training
- Advocacy
- Community Health
- Community Reinvestment
- Early Learning
- Foster Grandparents
- Green Technology
- Sub Grantees
- Workforce Development
- Youth Services Division
Organization: Administrative Offices

• Executive Team
• Human Resources
• Finance
• Business Management
• Performance Management
• Resource Development
• Communications
• General Counsel
• Information Technology
• Strategic Positioning
NOTIONS OF POVERTY
Key Definitions

• **Webster’s:** the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions

• **World Bank:** extreme poverty (>$1.90 PPP/day) moderate poverty (>$3.10 PPP/day)

• **UN:** 2 categories- income poverty and human poverty
**Income Poverty**

- “It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit.

- Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society.
Human Poverty

• It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.” (UN Statement, 1998)
Ruby Payne defines poverty as “the extent to which an individual does without resources.”

- Financial
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Mental
- Physical
- Support Systems
- Relationships/Role Models
- Knowledge of hidden rules
Absolute vs Relative Poverty

• **Absolute**, or extreme poverty, is when people **lack the basic necessities for survival**, such as food, clean water, housing, sufficient clothing or medicines, and access to social services.

• **Relative** poverty is when the cost of maintaining an average, acceptable standard of living, relative to other members of society, **exceeds available income**. Basic needs may be met, but fewer resources, opportunities, and goods are available.
Situational Poverty

• A period during which an individual or family falls below the poverty line because of a sudden event

• Caused by a range of uncontrollable and often unpredictable events:
  • a divorce
  • death of the family head
  • illness
  • a natural disaster
  • loss of job
  • turn of the national economy
  • decisions gone amiss

• Events can escalate until the person finds themselves without material possessions or an income source
Situational Poverty

• TYPE 1: CYCLICAL - depends on the ebb and flow of the national and global economy

• TYPE 2: ASSET BASED - triggered specific Crises. Two types of household are commonplace to this:
  • Relatively secure middle-class families: Their fall below the poverty line usually encompasses making a high-risk decision.
  • Families with permanently low income: The position of these families shifts constantly from above to below the poverty line and described as having a “precarious well-being”.
Generational Poverty

• Characterized by individuals or families that are a part of least two generations that have lived in perpetual poverty.

• Counterproductive traditions are passed down such as low emphasis on education

• Little to no assets are passed on from one generation to the next
Generational Poverty – Key Factors

• Hopelessness: key factor in creating the cycle—one generation to the next
  • challenged with three other forms of poverty
    » Educational Poverty
    » Parental Poverty
    » Spiritual Poverty

• Surviving vs. Planning
  • focused on the issue/challenge facing them today: money for food, finding a place to live, dealing with family member’s issues, unresolved health issues
  • daily experience—each day presents another issue
  • everything is done under the cloak of urgency

• Values and Patterns
  • The values of individuals and families caught in generational poverty tend to center more on survival and short-term outcomes.
Situational vs Generational Poverty

• People experiencing situational poverty usually have better tools to cope and overcome their setback than those who live in generational poverty

• Situational poverty can be caused by a turn in the national economy or decisions specific to the household experiencing poverty

• Families experiencing Situational Poverty tend to remain hopeful, knowing that this is a temporary setback

• Without hope and the belief that life can be better, the motivation and energy needed to break the cycle of generational poverty are very very very very low
Situational vs Generational Poverty

• The concept of planning typically doesn’t exist for people in generational poverty, due in part because planning is tied to the belief that the individual has sufficient control of their life
• Middle class values encompass education, work and being perceived as a productive member of society
• People in situational poverty are able to envision and hope for a future of self-sufficiency
• People in generational poverty are unable to envision a future of self-sufficiency and what that means
• People are not always ready to accept the responsibilities that come with self-sufficiency
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<th>Family Size</th>
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<th>125%</th>
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<td>$11,880</td>
<td>$14,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Persons</td>
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<td>4 Persons</td>
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<td>6 Persons</td>
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<td>7 Persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Persons</td>
<td>$40,890</td>
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<tr>
<td>For each additional person, add</td>
<td>$4,160</td>
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BARRIERS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY
Undiagnosed/Untreated Mental Health

How is it a problem:

- Reduced ability to communicate coherently
- Reduces eligibility for employment
- Reduces ability to perform on the job
- Reduces the ability to stay in a structured environment
- Reduces the types of jobs that one can apply for

Recommended Interventions:

- Advocacy for increased government funding of treatment programs for mental health issues
- Advocate for early detection and intervention public policy
- Advocate for detection and treatment in educational systems
Low Educational Attainment and Low Skills

How is it a problem?

• Reduces eligibility for employment
• Reduces ability to perform on the job
• Reduces the types of jobs that one can apply for

Recommended Interventions:

• Referral and Enrollment in GED Programs
• Referral and Enrollment in Skills Training Programs and Apprenticeships
• Training programs that come with compensation for time spent in training
Current/Past Drug Usage

How is it a problem?

• Affects decision making capacity
• Reduces eligibility for employment
• Reduces ability to perform on the job
• Precludes one from being hired in the first place

Recommended Interventions:

• Referral and Enrollment in Treatment Programs
• Abstinence programs targeted at children and youth
• Teaching about the consequences of dependency
Dependents and Obligations

How is it a problem?

- Reduces flexibility
- Increases the threshold of income and assets individual or family needs in order to live self-sufficiently
- Increases the accommodations one has to arrange in order to accept a job offer

Recommended Interventions:

- Inform children and youth about the consequences of sexual behavior on long-term self-sufficiency
- Delayed child bearing
- Child bearing in emotionally and financially secure relationships
Incarceration/Criminal Record

How is it a problem?

• Affects credibility
• Reduces job opportunities

Recommended Interventions:

• Referrals for expungement programs
• Provide information to youth about the cost of early involvement with the criminal justice system on their long-term self-sufficiency
• Alternative punishment for offenders who are children or youth
Exploitative Jobs and Low Wage Jobs

How is it a problem?

• Keeps income earned below threshold required to become and maintain self sufficient
• Creates distrust in the value of earning ones income by working

Recommended Interventions:

• Advocate for policies that reduce exploitative employment practices as well as exploitative jobs
• Join activists working to get the minimum wage increased
History of Dependence on Public Assistance

How is it a problem?

• Reduces the drive to plan
• Reduces the drive to work
• Reduces the ability to imagine life without assistance
• Creates generational dependency

Recommended Interventions:

• Educate children in families on public assistance about how much better life would be if they are positioned to earn more than they would ever receive through public assistance
• Help current families to visualize the possibilities outside of their current existence
• Use tax program as a way to show customers what is possible
Other Barriers

- Fast Pace of Technological Advancement
- Entertainment Culture
- Insecurities about the intent of public policies
- Increased cost of housing
- Burden of High debt
- etc.
DC Central Kitchen

- Customers with histories of mental health issues must have access to necessary medication and been undergoing treatment for at least six months
- When a client is in need of mental health treatment the area’s largest mental health services nonprofit is engaged in service delivery
- Customers with addiction problems must be in a treatment program
- When medical services are required, clients are directed to Unity Health Care or Christ House, a 24-hour residential medical facility for homeless men and women.
EDGECWOOD

- Staff are trained to identify customers with psycho/emotional for counseling
- Referrals are provided to Transformational Thinking workshops which involve Group Comprehensive Counseling
- Referrals for financial Literacy workshops to participants in which topics include budgeting, spending habits, credit reports, credit repair and bank account management.
- At the conclusion of the workshops participants are able to join the credit union and open savings and checking accounts.
EDGEWOOD

• Transformational Thinking is a dynamic 3-week workshop conducted by a licensed clinician that helps individuals to identify and address personal challenges and barriers that may interfere with successful achievement of their life and employment goals.
EDGEWOOD

• Participants who complete the workshop gain insight into past experiences and their impact on current behaviors and actions

• They attain increased clarity in personal and professional goals and the ability to action plan in support of those goals

• They create a clear personal mission statement and commitment to who they are and what they say they will do in life.
UPO’s COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT

• Individual Intake and Assessment
• Daily Medication and Monitoring
• Individual, Group and Family Therapy
• Client Education
• HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Screening
• Breathalyzer and Urine Analysis Testing
• Referrals to Community Support and Programs
• Case Management and Referral Services
UPO’s IDA Program

• Matching savings (8:1)
  • Purchase a house
  • Start a business
  • Enhance Education

• Financial Management Classes
• Asset related goal setting
• Referrals for services by UPO Partners
• Active case management includes budgeting setting and budget management
• Results include a mobile car washing business, transportation services for seniors, etc.
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

• Objective
  • Career Youth Initiative – Targeting 150 DC youth ages sixteen (16) to twenty-five (25), this initiative will provide participants the opportunity to obtain a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

• Budget
  • 3.5 million

• Target
  • 150 youth earn General Equivalency Diploma
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

- Youths and young adults selected for the program tested at the ninth (9th) grade competency level
- Testing was done using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
- The program engaged students at least 30 hours per week
- Grade level progression was an outcome and was recorded for each student
- The program provided on-going case management services to all persons enrolled
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

• Actual classroom time was no fewer than four hours a day
• Actual classroom time was no fewer than five days a week
• Participating youths and young adults received a stipend of $7.00 per hour for each hour of participation
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

• **Staff**
  - Typically 20 students per instructor (i.e., Administrator, Instructors, Tutors, etc.)
  - Staff development needs/professional development

• **Supplies**
  - Textbooks (specific types of GED materials)
  - Multimedia instructional aides
  - Testing materials
    » Core Indicators of student performance
  - Resources for diverse learners, i.e., English as a Second Language
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

• Intake/Assessment
  • Enrollment process
  • Criteria for student selection
  • Initial Assessment, Orientation, Goal Setting, Advising, Assessment of Progress, Pre-completion, Follow-up
    » Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)
  • Addressing different learning styles
ARRA: CAREER YOUTH INITITIVE

- Supportive Services
  - Coordination and Collaboration with other programs
  - Advisory council
  - Case Management

- Outcomes of the GED Program
  - Exit options (completes exit forms and client close-out structure)
  - Referrals
  - Reporting student graduation or GED testing schedule structure
RESULTS

- Planned
  - 150

- Actual
  - 139

- Success Rate
  - 92.67%
Success Factors

• Stipend Payment
  • indicated to students that classroom instruction and obtaining a GED had value
  • allowed them to focus on their education before pursuing employment

• Case Management
  • Placed professional resources at the disposal of customers
  • Enabled customers to be successful in either overcoming or completely eliminating the barriers to success

• Right Partnerships
  • Resources of partners enabled UPO to leverage ARRA funds awarded to a large extent
EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

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Interventions

• Determine what you are dealing with: Situational vs Generational Poverty
• Determine which partners are effective at handling customers with psycho / social / emotional / mental health issues
• Transformational Thinking (1 on1; Workshops)
• Treatment/Therapy for undiagnosed/untreated past trauma
• Vocational Skills Training (with stipends where possible)
• Soft Skills Training
Interventions

- Expungement programs
- Multi-generational case management
- Alternative punishment for youth offenders
- Home Economics training
- Targeting children and youth with programs that allow them to think outside their reality of their surroundings and family situation
- Fatherhood training
- Training for parenting
- Advocacy for policy change
References

11. Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE): http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/faq.cfm