



CASE STUDY CARITAS

Proving outcomes, driving growth, improving the community

WHAT WE DID:

Knowledge Advisory Group (KAG) took steps to help CARITAS clarify its goals and strategies to reach those goals. KAG initially mapped out **logic models, or graphical representations of the relationships between CARITAS' resources, programs and projected outcomes**. The logic models comprehensively addressed the goals of the organization, allowing the nonprofit to create a more effective presence with clients, funders, sponsors and the community at large.

“This was a time-consuming, yet valuable exercise,” said CARITAS COO, Karen O’Brien, after working with KAG to **synthesize the recently merged organizations’ separate terminologies into a consistent, more effective language**. The new terminology could communicate everything from a client leaving the program to one’s eligibility for services. O’Brien went on to profess that, “Working with KAG really forced conversations internally that were necessary for us to move forward.”

Springing from the logic models, KAG began helping CARITAS **prioritize their list of identified outcomes**, and develop data collection tools to measure those outcomes. This included more effectively framing

survey questions to elicit higher quality data and identifying specifically who should implement each of these tools, as well as the frequency by which these tools should be used. Some of these new data collection tools are currently in place, primarily in the employment and addiction recovery programs, while others will be rolled out in the near future.

With KAG's help, CARITAS has also begun the gradual process of **replacing a paper form system** of collecting data for its recovery program, The Healing Place, **with an electronic database**. KAG helped with revising forms to not only be more streamlined and align with the new definitions that had been created, but to also easily transition to a formalized data management system in the future. As of now, the new forms have resulted in a **50 percent savings in staff time**. KAG also assisted with development of data collection protocols and instructions to improve the accuracy and consistency of data collection efforts.

After finalizing data collection instruments and processes, KAG assisted CARITAS with selection of a software provider to create a customized system to effectively and **accurately capture program data**. KAG continued to consult with CARITAS as they implemented and tested the new software.

WHAT THEY LEARNED:

Data collection and analysis will put quality information at CARITAS' fingertips which it can use for marketing, impact statements and in a variety of other transformative ways. This data will also help the organization identify the deficits and gaps in its programming to promote continuous improvements in service. A new program and center is currently on the horizon for CARITAS.

"Knowledge Advisory Group has become an extension of our staff, helping us tackle challenging yet critical evaluation questions," said O'Brien.

“Trina and her staff of talented professionals listened exceptionally well in an effort to discern the complexity of our challenges. Our project became much more involved than originally anticipated, and KAG was with us every step of the way.”

— KAREN O'BRIEN, COO, CARITAS



data strategy



clearly identified
outcomes



defined database
requirements



telling the
story



meaningful
reports

ABOUT THE CLIENT:

The CARITAS shelter has helped thousands of individuals and families in the RVA community break the cycles of homelessness and addiction since the 1980's. Having just merged with another agency, CARITAS recognized the need for the two entities to unite as one when determining outcomes and program definitions. To draw inspiration,

CARITAS leadership staff attended a measurement and evaluation seminar conducted by Knowledge Advisory Group. They quickly learned from KAG how data could be used to strengthen their partnerships, funding and endorsements, bolster community influence and ultimately accomplish goals.

