



## CASE STUDY: Nonprofit Impact Strategy

### Situation

Fallout from the 2009 economic recession and local, state, and federal spending cuts to health and human service programs exacerbated the needs of financially struggling individuals and families in the greater Pittsburgh community and placed new populations at risk. The United Way of Allegheny County wanted to take bold steps to ensure continued efficient and effective investment in programs that addressed Allegheny County's most critical community needs. The United Way engaged The Hill Group to assess changes in community needs brought about by the economic downturn and to develop a strategy to maximize the impact of United Way resources on financially struggling adults and families.

### Solution

The Hill Group identified four areas where investment of limited United Way resources would have the greatest potential impact on the community over both the short- and long-term, while remaining consistent with the traditional values and strengths of the organization. The research also provided the basis for the United Way of Allegheny County's new strategy for addressing the needs of financially struggling adults and families.

**Programs that addressed one or more of the following core impact areas would be given funding priority:**

- Assisting households to access resources and benefits
- Preventing housing-induced crises and homelessness
- Supporting individuals in securing and maintaining employment
- Promoting collaborations across the service landscape

**In order to further define these impact areas and to fill critical service gaps, The Hill Group also identified three target populations for future United Way investments:**

- Newly Struggling
- One-Event Away from Crisis
- Struggling Single Female Householders

Many state and federal assistance programs only become available to individuals and families once they have fallen into a state of crisis. The Hill Group study indicated that the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources was through investments in programs that avert crises all together. As a result, the primary focus of United Way funding shifted to preventing and averting crises for financially struggling adults and families.

### Results

- A community needs assessment which defined the needs of financially struggling adults and families and existing service gaps
- Identified four core areas where investment of limited United Way resources would have the greatest short- and long-term community impact
- Provided analysis of various data sources, discussions with community agency leadership, and outreach to service recipients and donors

### CLIENT

UNITED WAY OF  
ALLEGHENY  
COUNTY

### INDUSTRY

NONPROFITS

WORKFORCE AND  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

### PROJECT

STRATEGIC  
PLANNING

FOCUS GROUPS

SURVEY DESIGN  
AND  
ADMINISTRATION

DATA ANALYSIS

## Behind the Scenes

The Hill Group utilized a comprehensive approach to understand the needs of financially struggling adults and families, define the gaps in fulfilling those needs, and identify areas in which the United Way could have the greatest impact. Our team analyzed various data sources, interviewed community agency leadership, and engaged service recipients and donors. Findings at each stage of the strategy development were vetted by an Advisory Committee of agency, donor, and United Way leadership to help ensure maximum impact of the strategy, once implemented.

## About The Hill Group, Inc.

Founded in 1953, The Hill Group, Inc. is a premier provider of management counsel, specializing in strategy, execution, and measurement. Our team of consultants has deep experience across several industries, enabling our team to draw on best practices from a variety of sectors to help our clients grow, innovate, and achieve maximum potential.

**Strategy** – *Envisioning an organization’s future, capitalizing on its opportunities, identifying strategic priorities, and implementing positive change.*

- Strategy Development
- Decision Support and Analysis
- Strategic Planning and Management
- Business Planning and Feasibility Assessments
- Mergers, Acquisitions, and Strategic Alliance Planning
- Market Research and Analysis

**Execution** – *Ensuring that an organization is efficiently and effectively utilizing its resources to its full potential.*


- Process Improvement and Innovation
- Business Model Development and Resource Allocation
- Financial Assessment and Management
- Turnaround, Business Transformation, and Change Management
- Governance Assessment and Development

**Measurement** – *Increasing an organization’s performance through measurement and continuous improvement.*


- Measurement
- Business Analytics and Intelligence
- Economic Impact Assessment
- Employee Opinion, 360-Degree Feedback, and Service Quality Surveys
- Industry Benchmarking Surveys

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