

Erie Neighborhood House –

Improving Fiscal Management and Reporting Management Systems

Challenge

Erie Neighborhood House (ENH), a Chicago nonprofit providing education programs to low-income communities, has expanded significantly over the past decade. The biggest contributor to growth: the launch of Erie Elementary Charter School. But, the new school added to Erie's program complexity, straining the capability of the organization to gather the key financial and budgeting information to make the right decisions to sustain future growth.

Our Work

In partnership with the Wallace Foundation's initiative to strengthen financial management at nonprofits providing out-of-school time and youth services, Fiscal Management Associates assessed Erie's financial operations, from planning and reporting to staffing and internal controls. FMA found that budgeting was taking place in silos with little communication among Finance, Development and Program departments.

FMA benchmarked ENH against other nonprofits, and spearheaded a collaborative budgeting process using a team decision-making approach. FMA brought together Finance, Development and Program staff for training in key financial issues and in clarifying their roles in the budgeting process. FMA advised Program staff on reading and applying budgets.

Results

The project underscored the importance for the entire organization to understand the full budget picture. The Finance, Development and Program departments are now regularly sharing information and collaborating in the budgeting process. With greater financial clarity, ENH has strengthened its capacity for informed decision-making, and now is better positioned to pursue programmatic expansion, as well as strategic partnerships and alliances.

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“Our work with FMA helped us clarify our financial reporting lines of responsibility, empowered our program directors to become fully engaged in our budgeting process, and, as a result, greatly improved our financial reporting systems and strategic decision-making capability.”

– Celena Roldan,
Executive Director,
Erie Neighborhood House



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