

Sharing Strengths and Linking Resources for Sustainability

The Collaborative Trail of Two Agencies

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Policy Brief

Sharing Strengths and Linking Resources for Sustainability

The Collaborative Trail of Two Agencies

INTRODUCTION:

The United Way of Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council (UWGMC/LVC) was established in 2002 to develop and implement strategies for building a caring community that delivers linguistically and culturally competent social services throughout Mercer County. The Council's signature products and services include a study of the Latino community, forums, conferences on building capacity for organizations and providers, and a leadership institute geared toward leaders working with diverse populations. In 2004, the Council released a study entitled, *Latinos in Mercer County a Reflection of the Changing Latino Population in the Northeast* that highlighted many issues that affect the delivery of services to Latinos. The most pressing issues that surfaced were language and cultural barriers that are compounded by the lack of bilingual/bi-cultural professionals that could meet the needs of diverse clients.

The study recommended that UWGMC/LVC support the strengthening of organizational infrastructures that would continue to thrive under a change in leadership, the creation of customized services without duplication and the development of a map for true collaboration; hence the birth of a Community-based Organization (CBO) Initiative. UWGMC/LVC selected Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.), in Hightstown, New Jersey, to receive a consultant on-loan to engage in strategic planning and organizational development. The CBO Initiative approached this project by hiring a consultant to conduct an assessment; develop a strategic plan and convene a joint board retreat to discuss future collaboration opportunities between the two agencies. The process evolved into executive coaching that provided both executive directors on-going support to address the organizational issues that could become a barrier to implementing collaborative strategies goals.

This policy brief will focus on the need to strengthen the capacity of non-profits serving diverse populations through a capacity building initiative. This pilot project provided opportunities for both organizations to creatively approach building capacity with the guidance of an expert and develop more meaningful collaborations. This policy brief will also outline lessons learned from the two agencies that participated in the pilot project, the consultant who worked with both agencies within a nine-month period, and experts in the field. In addition, this brief will share the successful CBO Initiative model, and make recommendations to both the nonprofit community and grant-maker community.

Why is Capacity Building Important to Non-profits?

Capacity building is not a new concept but as non-profit managers strive to do more with less, it is a valuable resource that has become essential for collaboration and sustainability of non-profit organizations. Capacity building is defined as "action that improves non-profits effectiveness" (DeVita, & Felming, 2001). Capacity building can be a broad concept that includes but is not limited to board development; leadership and staff development; strategic planning; fund development; risk management; marketing/public relations; product and service development; organizational performance and impact; accountability and evaluation; etc. These core components are worth mentioning to provide a global perspective of what non-profits must learn to manage in the workplace to be successful. These components are further complicated when organizations are also striving to be linguistically and culturally competent as they deliver services and meet community needs. "Culturally competent service delivery is

having working knowledge of the unique cognitive and affective needs of culturally diverse clients and providing services that meet those needs” (Ingram, 2000). Often these services must be offered in the language the client prefers.

Although all these areas are critical to non-profits, this policy brief will underscore the importance of strategic planning and the lessons learned from the two agencies that participated in our 2007-2008 CBO Initiative. The UWGMC/LVC is committed to encouraging best practices across Mercer County social service systems and to recommending to multiple audiences, the types of supports the nonprofits needs as they relate to strategic planning and creating linguistically and culturally sensitive paradigm of service. These tenets are echoed throughout the policy brief and are part of UWGMC/LVC broader advocacy agenda.

- 1. Strategic Planning is the first step at looking at collaboration and sustainability.** Nonprofits that find partner agencies that are mission-compatible can support each others strengths and partner in areas that need support. Without a clear plan as to where the organization(s) want to be and how they can get there, an organization functions in a constant crisis mode. A strategic plan can be a map for the future as one of our participants eloquently stated. Nonprofits that already have successful culturally and linguistically competent social services must be supported and sustained to continue providing this much needed service.
- 2. It is not enough to just give grants to nonprofit organizations without technical assistance and support.** More than ever CEOs/managers are juggling multiple roles and responsibilities that require substantial amount of support, technology/research, infrastructure, and measurable outcomes. Technical assistance at multiple levels is vital for future success of nonprofit organizations.
- 3. Policymakers and grant-makers have a responsibility to support the infrastructure and capacity building of the grantees they fund via capacity building.** Mercer County nonprofits must be run like a business and become savvy providers that look at the big picture as well as the bottom line. Many nonprofits do not function like a business because they lack a concrete infrastructure that is supported by key staff and a plan with measurable outcomes. Functioning like a business can seems like a foreign language to some nonprofits but with guidance nonprofits can learn to speak the same language as their partners and funders and reposition their organizations for success.

The United Way Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council examined three challenges for nonprofits as they seek to collaborate and sustain their mission and organization long-term. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of strategic planning
- Lack of seed funds to implement strategic plans
- Lack of executive coaching

Lack of Strategic Planning:

In the last decade, the establishment of nonprofit organizations has increased but funding has decreased. More than ever nonprofits need a sound strategic plan and/or business plan to guide their work. Large nonprofits are becoming more sophisticated, while smaller non-profits are struggling due to their lack of infrastructure. According to Calvin Thomas Jr., director of the Support Center in Trenton (affiliated with the Support Center for Nonprofit Management in New York City), nonprofits need to better understand the relationship between internal and external factors and how they impact the sustainability of their organizations overtime. They must strengthen their capacity to better evaluate how they are making community impact through documented measurable outcomes. Strategic planning involving multiple levels that include senior staff, board, and strategic partners is critical when determining the long range direction of an organization. Future opportunities to ensure sustainability must be preceded by a thoughtful review of past failures and successes (Thomas, 2008).

Grizel Ubarry, of G. Ubarry, Inc., the consultant to the CBO initiative, also states the benefits of strategic planning to nonprofits. "Strategic planning is a time for the board and the executive director to be introspective. It is a time to examine what an organization does well and what may need to be change. When organizations commit to using their strategic plans, you can see significant and remarkable differences in their growth. Strategic plans position an organization for success by guiding their work using reasonable strategic goals and benchmarks that are measurable. Successful plans are those that have strong buy-in and cohesiveness between the board and the executive director's vision for the organization. Boards and executive directors need to have consensus and to be on the same page. This is fundamental and it contributes to successful organizations. It is extremely important to have an experienced consultant that can be objective and can guide this process to help build a bridge between the board's and senior staff's perspectives" (Ubarry, 2008).

Some agencies do not have a strategic plan because:

- They do not know what it is and its value to an organization
- Their budgets do not permit this expense and therefore it is not included
- They think it too time consuming and they lack time.
- They lack a strong board that focuses on long-term sustainability

In addition, nonprofits need strategic staff with specific skill-sets to carry out their work. With low salaries and benefits, attracting qualified and competent staff (the best and the brightest) to their organization is very difficult. Even if they are lucky in recruiting such a candidate, retention of the employee is very challenging due to the employee being overworked, underpaid, and often under-appreciated. The issue of employee retention is further exacerbated when bilingual/bicultural professionals are not allowed to function within a cultural framework which may require them to do business differently. For example, if a therapeutic session is usually an hour, for Latinos clients it may take longer due to the personal and social affect that culturally sensitive case management requires. Bilingual/bicultural professionals are often misunderstood and feel isolated in their quest to provide culturally/linguistically appropriate services. This is due to the fact that colleagues/supervisors do not understand the modifications they must make to service delivery plans that differ from normal agency practices. In strategic planning, particularly in program development and marketing strategies, demographic changes as well as cultural approaches must be considered.

Both Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.), deliver culturally competent services because they have actively recruited and hired staff that understand the cultural nuances of the community they serve. The two agencies employ staff that represents the diversity of the population they serve. Although Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.), are not Latino CBOs, their savvy boards have hired CEOs that know the community and are a part of the community. Both CEOs are culturally and linguistically competent which allows them to supervise staff and develop meaningful programs that advance their mission and provide consumer driven services. Their position and years of experience working with diverse populations helps them develop and implement policies and programs that keep the conversations of race relations and cultural competency at the forefront of professional development for their staff. It is important to note that because having the same racial and cultural background as your clients does not make you culturally competent. Cultural competency is the examination of your own bias, and the exploration and acceptance of other people's values that may be different from your own. Even with competent staff, these conversations must be on-going and strategic to positively impact the diverse families that arrive for service on a daily basis.

Lack of Seed Funds for Implementing Strategic Plans:

Nonprofits are the experts in selling their programs/services that impact the needs in the community, but very few funders are interested in funding overhead and capacity building efforts. Most grant-makers are interested in supporting direct services but not infrastructure that supports the direct service. “One of the primary jobs of many nonprofits is to provide vital services to people who can’t pay for them, or at least can’t pay the full freight. Especially in health and social services, a third party usually pays for the product on behalf of the consumer. Not only are nonprofit rules governing money—and therefore business dynamics—different from those in the for-profit sector, they are largely unknown, even among nonprofits (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2004).

This statement speaks directly to the need to provide support to nonprofits to build strong and viable infrastructures for their organizations. United Way of Greater Mercer County has taken a different approach by funding this capacity building effort that can be duplicated with other nonprofits looking to sustain their programs in an extremely unpredictable economic climate. News headlines echo the needs and struggles facing nonprofits as they continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable citizens of the community. Some nonprofits are staying afloat while others are throwing out their life raft so they can be rescued by the kindness of others. United Way is a leader in building a safety net for those serving the poor, and the needy. Nationally, there are conversations about bailout plans everywhere. But who is going to bailout the nonprofit community which is in the trenches working against the odds, to help children succeed, youth reach their potential, families struggling with multiple problems, and the elderly to remain independent?

The investment that United Way provided to Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Action, Inc.), through the leadership of UWGMC/LVC, has provided these two agencies with the opportunity to turn a corner through the development of a strategic plan. But, what is a strategic plan without seed funds for a marketing plan, resource investment plan and program development plan (business plan), or infrastructure improvements to function effectively and efficiently? Each of these tools is essential for nonprofits to function more like a business than a charity. A strategic plan is the beginning not the end of building infrastructure and long-term planning for nonprofit organizations. If nonprofits are wise, they will maintain their strategic plan as a living, working document that guides their work for future success. They will revisit the plan often and implement their strategic goals to build on their strengths and improve their areas of limitations.

“Without the support of United Way through the CBO Initiative, we could have never paid for a strategic plan. Our agency was poised for growth and we ready to take the next step. This opportunity came at the perfect time. Through this process, we have learned how to make the plan a working, living document.”

Lydia Santoni-Williams, Executive Director
Rise, (a community service partnership)

Both Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.) are strong agencies in terms of reputation and community impact. They are leaders in providing tailored cultural and linguistic social services that honor the values of diverse populations. The CBO Initiative gave them an opportunity to carve out blocks of time to think about the future in ways they had not considered before and develop realistic and measurable outcomes for repositioning their organization for success.

Strategic Planning Helped Us Move Intentionally Toward the Future
The Story of Better Beginnings Child Development Center
Hightstown, New Jersey

Better Beginnings was founded by the Human Relations Council in 1967 as a volunteer nursery school for children in need of early childhood development services through the support of United Way, the Princeton area community, and the government. These supporters helped to jumpstart the school to serve 30 children and families. In 1974, through federal block grant dollars, the center expanded to serve 70 children and today it serves 90 children ages 2 ½ to 11 years old in an early childhood accredited program, an after-school program and a summer program. Over 85% of children enrolled at Better Beginnings are from the growing Latino population of the Hightstown and East Windsor areas. In addition, to working directly with children, Better Beginnings strive to engage parents through interactive activities for parent and child and information sessions. It also offers early intervention and screenings for children and families through its TRIO program in collaboration with Rise and the Jewish Family & Children's Service Center.

United Way Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council selected Better Beginnings to be part of a dual strategic planning capacity-building initiative that has provided tremendous results to the agency's infrastructure. This is the first time the agency embarked in a strategic planning process. "United Way afforded us the resources to enter into the process of having a formal strategic plan. We now have a well thought-out plan which illustrates where we are and what we need to do to remain a 'better beginning' for families and children" said Luz Horta, Executive Director of Better Beginnings.

The strategic process created a unified work plan that highlighted strengths and obstacles that needed to be addressed by establishing three priority areas including resource development, marketing, and program development. It helped restructure the board to allow for board members' talents to be used more intentionally. It positioned the center to recruit new board members and seek new funding with a well-thought out plan for the future. It aroused conversations between board members about future collaboration efforts with Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.).

Both Better Beginnings and Rise, (Community Action Service Center), have taken their strategic plans to the next level. Better Beginnings is using the plan as a recruitment tool to engage new partners and Rise took their plan and successfully changed their name and launched a marketing plan. These efforts were taken on by volunteers but with additional funding dedicated to infrastructure improvements. Both organizations can strength their overall strategic goals for sustainability and expand their services to serve more targeted populations.

“United Way afforded us the resources to enter into the process of having a formal strategic plan. We now have a well thought-out plan which illustrates where we are and what we need to do to remain a ‘better beginning’ for families and children.”

Luz Horta, Executive Director
Better Beginning Child Development Center, Inc.

Lack of Executive Coaching:

Every nonprofit executive director or CEO can tell the tales of the countless hours they have invested in sustaining programs, fundraising to close funding gaps, and cultivating community partnerships. They can also tell of their countless hours functioning in crisis mode to link a family with a unique situation to community resources that do not presently exist. Overworked and driven, these executives need someone who understands their daily challenges that can mentor them to work smarter not harder. Executive coaching can help alleviate some of the pressures executives experience and provide them with a sounding board for strategic solutions and leveraging of resources.

Both executive directors of Better Beginnings and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc.), gave great reviews of Grizel Ubarry, the consultant, who not only drove the strategic planning process for the agencies but provided executive coaching. The two executive directors felt that this additional support made the process rewarding and fueled them to work smarter not harder. The executive coaching provided the CEOs with a confidential sounding board, since they do not have peers within their agencies that have expertise in nonprofit management and growth management.

Most executives are on the road to burnout if they do not find a balance between the organization’s operational and financial needs. According to Grizel Ubarry, consultant to the project, she was impressed with both these organizations and their executives. “They do an incredible amount of work and represent the bridge between the community and their organizations. They have unwavering passion to serve the people within their community with excellence. They, as so many nonprofit executives, give their heart and soul to the delivery of services for the greater good. Many of their collaborative efforts are successful because they are not territorial and are grounded in their philosophy of service” (Ubarry, 2008).

When you truly examine the heart and soul of any nonprofit, they are clearly in it for the people they serve and sometimes that love for community, interferes with functioning like a business. “Nonprofit organizations provide the basis and infrastructure for forming social networks that support strong communities. Civil society requires more than linking individuals to institutions; it requires building relationships among people” (DeVita and Fleming, 2001). The heart of any community is in the nature of its people. It is the main reason most CEOs wake up in the morning with the conviction that they can indeed make a difference and they do whatever is necessary to impact communities.

Strategic Planning Helps Board and Staff Work from the Same Page
The Story of Rise (formerly the Community Action Service Center, Inc.)
Hightstown, New Jersey

Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center) was founded in 1967 by a small group of community stakeholders who noticed the need for a “hand up” to the less fortunate in their community of Hightstown, New Jersey. For over 40 years, Rise has served this growing community through providing emergency assistance, food pantry, annual health & wellness fairs, drug & alcohol counseling, HIV case management, a summer camp enrichment program, and recently developed the Greater Goods Thrift Store. Rise also partners with Better Beginnings to provide early intervention and screenings for children and families through a United Way collaborative named TRIO.

United Way of Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council selected Rise to be part of a dual strategic planning capacity-building initiative that has provided tremendous results to the agency’s infrastructure. The strategic process led to the development of a more precise mission and vision statements, the creation of core values that are guiding the organization, and prioritized strategic goals that include in the top three: resource development, revenue generation, and marketing.

As a by-product of the strategic plan, Rise launched a marketing plan that led to a new name, a new website, and a direct mailing campaign that targeted 6,000 people. This is the largest appeal the organization has ever taken on. “Without the support of United Way through the CBO Initiative we could have never paid for a strategic plan. We did not have the resources available to pay for a strategic plan but we needed a business plan to support the organization’s growth. It was the perfect time and we learned how to make the plan a working, living document”, said Lydia Santoni Williams, executive director of Rise. Additionally, Rise is collaborating more with Better Beginnings through shared services that included administrative expenses, in-service training for staff, and cross agency services.

True Collaboration Leverages More than Just Dollars:

The United Way Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council believes in collaboration; and in this economic climate calls for agencies to develop innovative strategies that allow them to do more with less. Collaboration is paramount for success. Nonprofits can no longer work in their individual silos and be successful. They must be strategic about how they work and with whom they work. According to Lukas and Andrew consultants to nonprofits, there are four keys to successful collaboration: clarify the purpose, let form follow function, involve the right people, and get it in writing. Many people think they are collaborating but they are merely cooperating and coordinating.

For example, the Children’s Futures (CF) collaboration in Trenton, New Jersey brings public and private agencies together to improve child health and development outcomes for children 0-3. Before CF was established as a nonprofit organization that provides grants and technical assistance, the partner agencies worked in individual silos and often competed for similar funding opportunities. With CF leadership, these agencies are collaborating with each other and providing center-based health,

education, and social services utilizing a shared data system. The system allows them to link to each other and provide unified data to CF. According to Floyd Morris, President of Children’s Futures, “CF has been so successful because we have been able to focus our partner agencies on specific measurable outcomes. We have allowed each partner to work from their strengths using evidence-based practices. Because our outcomes and data-driven projects entails working with a number of agencies, staff training has always been a major trust of CF’s technical assistance. The specific trainings we’ve honed in on include program design and implementation, evaluation, management information system development, and internal financial controls.”

Collaboration requires work. Those who reap the rewards of collaboration invest a great deal of time into establishing lasting relationships, creating concrete structures to sustain the collaborative, and sharing responsibility for each others success. Collaboration should not be co-mingled with competition that focuses merely on getting a bigger slice of the pie. True collaboration is about getting a bigger pie so that each partner gets what they need to be successful.

In July 2005, after much research and community input, the United Way of Greater Mercer County (UWGMC) developed the concept of funding only collaborations. The investment philosophy of UWGMC shifted to look at the greater needs that could have greater impact. UWGMC believes that collaborative approaches are crucial to success and sustainability of community change efforts because they reduce duplication of service, provide integrated services to project partners, help to achieve community outcomes, leverage resources, and decrease costs. Funded projects are required to pool resources, utilize partnerships, and otherwise collaborate in order to meet desire community outcomes. The UWGMC/LVC adopted this same philosophy when it created the CBO Initiative. Both organizations that were selected were at a crossroads with higher demands for services while having limited access to resources. The growth of Latinos in Hightstown, New Jersey made the two agencies ideal for the project. The questions that were proposed in our plan to the consultant were the following:

- How can these two organizations remain economically sustainable while continuing to provide much needed services?
- Five years from today, what could these organizations look like? What would they have achieved?
- How can we (today) put in place a framework that will ensure a stronger and viable future for both organizations?
- How can both organizations collaborate ensuring a strong and healthy financial future?

“Knowing where your organization is going can only be found by understanding the past and finding a course that makes sense for your future – strategic planning is the first step to finding the road that will take you to a successful future.”

Craig Lafferty, President and CEO
United Way of Greater Mercer County

The CBO Initiative followed an unprecedented methodology to achieve an intentional map toward collaborations between the two agencies. The consultant hired worked individually with both organizations and established a half-day forum with both agencies’ boards to discuss long-term planning and future collaborations. Both organizations underwent a separate strategic planning process that was tailored directly to their needs and desires, followed by a joint forum used to finalize their plans using collaborative goals.

The process included the following steps:

Step 1: Meet with each board to determine how engaged they would be and to establish a strategic planning process outline/timetable through monthly meeting sessions held with each board.

Step 2: Implement strategic planning outline and timetable through monthly meetings with a Board established committee and key staff.

Step 3: Build consensus around one or two issues that each Board would like to discuss which are critical to their long-term planning and future collaborations.

Step 4: Establish a half-day forum to bring both Boards together to share their individual plans and develop collaborative goals for integration and inter-agency consideration.

Step 5: Finalize the strategic plans for both organizations and establish an annual implementation process for year one of the plan.

The Collaborative Trail of Two Agencies

On February 23, 2008, both boards of Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (Community Action Service Center, Inc.), held a “Collaborative Forum” with the goal of sharing each others strategic plans and opening a dialogue to continue to collaborate with each and other stakeholders to enhance services for families and children. Although some board members knew one another, the forum provided an opportunity to better acquaint themselves with members of the boards and see where they may have synergies to collaborate more intentionally. Granted these organizations had been collaborating in the past but not with long-term goals in mind. The consultant provided the boards a timeline of their past collaborations and their successes which include but are not limited to: holiday party efforts to collect gifts for children and families; both agencies share information about building systems for personnel management so that they could use cross-training opportunities for CPR/first aid training for staff, child development and parenting skills for staff development; shared services utilizing one shredding company and splitting the cost; and consulting with each other on program development and risk management, etc.

The two agencies’ most recent collaboration include the development of TRIO Program (Teaming Resources for Innovative Outcomes) a partnership between both agencies and the Jewish Family and Children’s Services Center (JFCSC). The clinical team of JFCSC provides on-site assessment and consultation to the families of both Better Beginnings and Rise (a community partnership), with the goal of supporting the mental and emotional health and competence of young children and their families. This collaborative case management approach helps families overcome obstacles such as hunger, poor/lack of health, safety, housing, and depression that “get in the way of children’s learning” and “helps meet the needs of vulnerable families.”

Better Beginnings Child Development Center and Rise (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc), are no longer at a crossroad because this dual strategic planning process helped to strengthen their individual infrastructure as well as develop a framework for collaboration that is embedded in every facet of both organizations from the board to staff.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations:

This CBO Initiative could not have been successful without the trust of the two agencies, their boards, and the investment each of them made to the processes of improving their agencies' infrastructures. Each agency invested time and resources. Besides receiving a grant from the UWGMC/LVC, each organization made a \$1,000 contribution to this initiative. More than ever nonprofits need a sound strategic plan and/or business plan to guide their work. Some nonprofits are staying afloat but others are throwing out their life raft so they can be rescued by the kindness of others. United Way is a leader in building a safety net for those serving the poor, and the needy. It remains committed to supporting four core funding areas; helping children to succeed, youth reaching their potential, aiding families struggling with multiple problems, and helping the elderly to remain independent. Every nonprofit executive director or CEO can tell the tales of the countless hours they have invested in sustaining programs, fundraising to close funding gaps, and cultivating community partnerships. Nonprofits that already have successful culturally and linguistically competent social services must be supported and sustained to continue providing this much needed service

This is not the end of the journey since economic times call for nonprofit innovation and collaboration. The United Way of Greater Mercer County Latino Vision Council is proud to have shared this model with the community which can be duplicated with other nonprofits and supported by the financial partners that are involved with these organizations. The following recommendations are aimed to provide nonprofits and grant-makers strategies for building strong and viable nonprofits that can sustain the turbulence of economic challenges.

What non-profit organizations can do:

- Annually, allocate some dollars in your budget to improve your agency's infrastructure.
- Explore the concept of shared-services with other organizations in your communities which are mission compatible or share the same geographic location.
- Develop clear objectives and core values for collaboration.
- Clearly outline the role of each partnering agency.
- Seek out joint funding opportunities.

What funders can do:

- Provide grantees technical assistance to strengthen the organizational capacity of their agencies in order to create a blueprint for long-term sustainability.
- Create an infrastructure of affordable capacity building and executive coaching resources for CBOs as they show their readiness to engage in strategic planning, marketing, public relations, etc.
- Provide funding for board and organizations for the specific purpose of collaborating.
- Provide linkages to corporations/businesses that can share resources to help nonprofits build capacity (i.e. human resources, risk management, staff development and training, marketing, graphic design, printing, etc.).

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WHO IS UNITED WAY OF GREATER MERCER COUNTY?

United Way of Greater Mercer County is a community-based organization that mobilizes local resources to meet the health and human care needs in greater Mercer County. It utilizes the collective power of people to work toward long-term solutions in three focus areas: Helping Children Succeed, Fostering Self-Sufficiency, and Caring for Seniors and People with Disabilities.

United Way works to advance the common good by improving lives in your community so that everyone **receives a quality education that leads to a stable job, earns enough income to support a family and maintains good health through retirement.**

COMMUNITY IMPACT

It takes the whole community, working together, to achieve results. United Way partners with local non-profits, businesses, governments, and volunteers to build initiatives that create lasting change by preventing problems from happening in the first place.

When you give to United Way's Community Impact Fund, your gift goes to work addressing and solving local problems and creating opportunities for a better life for all.

HOW WE WORK



**IDENTIFY
ISSUES**



**DEVELOP
PARTNERSHIPS**



**LEVERAGE
RESOURCES**



**IMPLEMENT
SOLUTIONS**



**MEASURE
RESULTS**

**WE INVITE YOU
TO BE PART OF THE
CHANGE.**

THINK OF *WE* BEFORE *ME*.

UNITED WAY LATINO VISION COUNCIL

In 2002, the Latino Vision Council (LVC) was formed and charged by United Way of Greater Mercer County (UWGMC) to conduct an assessment of the needs of Latinos in Mercer County. The Latino Study was a two-year process that included the collection of research data, meetings with key informants, community surveys, and the review of census data.

The LVC of UWGMC is a group of community leaders committed to developing a strategic plan that addresses the capacity of human service organizations to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive services that help to build stronger, caring communities in Mercer County. The goals of the Latino Vision Council are:

- to serve as a catalyst for developing sustainable Latino leadership in Mercer County
- to build the capacity of Latino community based organizations
- to develop an understanding of the needs of Latinos among the various sectors of the community
- to create partnerships among organizations to secure the resources needed to address these needs

To learn more about becoming a Latino Vision Council member, please contact Mr. Ely S. Mateo, Assistant Vice President of Resource Investment, at 609-637-4918 or ely.mateo@uwgmc.org.

Please join us in helping to support programs that are critical to strengthening our community and changing lives.

Together, we can make a difference.

**Want to make a difference?
Find out how at liveunitedgreatermercer.org**



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LIVE UNITED.**