

Investing in a Network of Human Services Agencies

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ABSTRACT

The Aloha United Way (AUW) serves the island of Oahu's population. Over the past ten years, it has transitioned from a fund raiser to a community builder. This paper will describe the latest step in becoming a Community Builder, a design of its investment strategy – how to distribute funds to its partners to create the greatest social good. Documenting the social services network was a key step in designing the investment strategy and keeping it up to date is essential for it to work.

As a fund raiser, the AUW conducted an annual fund raising campaign and distributed funds to its 63 partner agency. As a Community Builder, it still distributes funds to partners, and it also provides system wide services such as 211 telephone service, distributing resources other than funds (gifts in kind), and volunteer matching web site.

After a community needs assessment, five Community Impact Initiatives with 30 associated measures were identified. A task force of volunteers was charged with redesigning the resource distribution process to include support of partner agencies and making measurable progress on the five Impact Initiatives. This implies funding collaborations within the United Way and where gaps exist, to non-partner agencies.

The task force documented the social services network to include partner agencies, agency collaborations which include agencies not in the AUW family and their programs. Attributes were assigned to the programs and agencies such as the Impact Areas, programs that address Community Impact Initiatives, and inter agency joint programs. Using this network, a process was designed that the AUW will deploy to improve the quality of life on Oahu.