



## Impact: An Example of How Relationship, Research and Restoration Come Together

Northwest Side Housing Center (NWSHC) is an organization that identifies and responds to the needs of the community by leveraging resources to improve the economic well-being and quality of life in Belmont Cragin and surrounding Chicago, Ill., communities. With significant growth and a need to ensure that their mission and vision were both aligned with company and community needs, NWSHC embarked on a collaborative and inclusive three-year strategic plan in partnership with BECOME.

**“We didn’t try on our own (we knew we needed outside help) but we delayed our plan over a year because we could not find the ‘right’ consultant to work with us and be part of the planning process ... We needed a consultant that was culturally relevant, experienced, understood non-profits and used data informed decision making in their processes.”**

*– James Rudyk, Jr., Executive Director,  
Northwest Side Housing Center*

BECOME and NWSHC organized, planned and executed an engaging process beginning with a kick-off meeting which included participation from community members, NWSHC staff and board members. The purpose of this meeting was to foster deeper connection between participants and hear from stakeholders what they loved about the community in which they lived or served, what was needed for the community, what they envisioned in the future for a more vibrant and thriving community, and the role of NWSHC in helping the community to realize that vision.

Driven by the voices of stakeholders, a steering committee was formed, which was composed of NWSHC staff, directors and board members. The role of the steering committee was to capture these voices in developing and implementing their strategic plan. Through a thorough analysis of past strategic plans, a discussion of needs, goals, relationships and internal processes, BECOME facilitated bi-weekly meetings with the committee.

**“From the first meeting with Dr. Farmer-Smith, it was clear to me that not only was she a master facilitator, but she was also so kind, caring and empathic. She truly was interested in us and making sure we created an amazing strategic plan,”**

*said Rudyk.*

BECOME staff helped the steering committee create tools including surveys, interview and focus group protocols to obtain targeted information from each stakeholder group, such that the strategic plan incorporated the voice and needs of all stakeholders. Steering committee members disseminated surveys and interviewed staff in their departments, vendors, funders, community members and program leaders.

Using data collected from the tools in a qualitative analysis of emergent themes, BECOME helped the steering committee create SMART goals (goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time driven) that included strategies, indicators and measures for building internal leadership, visibility, community capacity, and internal and external relationships. BECOME presented this work during a NWSHC all-staff retreat to further facilitate cohesion toward these goals and help NWSHC assign leaders to create teams around each SMART goal and sub-goal.

**“We are finalizing our plan but right now it looks like our entire team and community [are] on the same page. Everyone having goals and these goals are driving the work and helping us drive change and create change in the community,”**

*said Rudyk.*

Through partnership with BECOME, NWSHC gained a blueprint to enhance their practices, build relationships with their internal and external community, and an understanding of their role in making the vision of their organization and community a reality. Regarding their experience in this process, what they enjoyed and gained, NWSHC Executive Director, James Rudyk, Jr. said he was most impressed with:

“Dr. McBride, the team, the level of care, concern thought, the planning, how well thought-out everything was, how the experts were used in their places/fields and were deployed as needed, when needed. The availability of everyone. How the entire team, especially Dr. Farmer-Smith made everyone feel so welcomed, valued, and heard. How [they] could relate to the community, to our staff, to me, to our board. How flexible and adaptable the team was. How everyone gave 100% for NWSHC.”