

THE CHALLENGE: NAVIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL LOSS

- Unexpected changes resulted in a sudden loss of more than 1 million dollars in grant funding to an organization with the expectation that programs' and services' levels would not change.
- Simultaneously a key leader stepped down from the organization to address family needs.
- Org-ology was called on to help the organization define options and opportunities to survive the crisis.

THE TECHNIQUE: TRIAGE AND MISSION PLANNING

- Building backwards from the community needs supported by the programs, defined and ranked critical work areas based on skills and activities, de-coupling work from job titles, roles, or personnel.
- Evaluating existing staff skill sets, including skills acquired in previous roles and not currently used, etc., to create a complete inventory of opportunities.
- Plotting service delivery needs over annual work cycle to determine what effort might be delayed until funding gap could be offset or when senior leadership role would be replaced.
- Developing an inventory of outsourcing options could replace previously in-house activities with fee-for-service would enable executive leadership to evaluate cost impacts and options vs. current and future cash flow.
- Developing communications strategy for internal and external representation of the changes would feed into a motivation strategy to avoid further staffing losses.

THE INTERVENTION

- Developed clear near-term plan for staffing changes and mid-range plan options that reflected optimistic and pessimistic recovery estimates.
- Worked regularly on individual and group level with teams and staff to reduce uncertainty and mistrust: team trainings, information Q&A sessions, and increased transparency around timeline and changes.
- Completed long-delayed, almost-complete projects in a visible manner to give staff tangible "wins" to celebrate.
- Worked individually with affected staff through coaching to assist in finding ways to do more with less.
- Reassessed recovery process at 3 and 6 months to adjust approach accordingly.

THE RESULTS

- Services provided to the community through the programs were not markedly affected.
- Staffing loss was minimized to two FTE as well as slow replacement of three positions that had been vacated due to natural attrition.
- Both FTE positions were replaced after 6 months.
- At 9-month mark, organizational morale of long-term staff is acceptable and new staff have brought great enthusiasm.