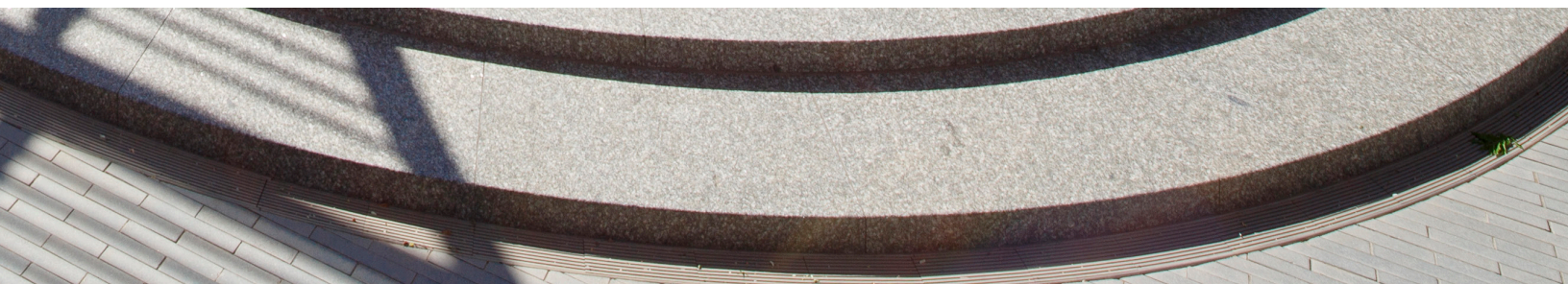# Nonprofit Innovation in a Time of Economic Change

North Texas 2008-2018

May 2018

The Institute for
Urban Policy Research
at The University of Texas at Dallas

Contents

Authors

Institute for Urban Policy Research

Timothy M. Bray, PhD

Anthony Galvan

Sara Mokuria

Alejandro Acero Murillo

Laila Jiwani

CapitalOne℠

This report was commissioned by Capital One during the first quarter of 2018. Capital One is celebrating its 10th anniversary of its Plano campus and establishing a corporate presence in the Dallas Forth Worth Metroplex. Part of this celebration involves highlighting Capital One's active decision to be part of the DFW community, and not just an employer in the area. This involvement takes the form of outreach and collaboration with nonprofits in charge of innovative programs. This paper was used as a springboard for questions asked during a panel with nonprofit leaders Capital One collaborates with at its 10th anniversary event on April 20, 2018.

Introduction

North Texas has experienced tremendous economic prosperity since the great recession of 2008. Figure 1 depicts this growth pictorially, with aerial photography from 1986 through 2016. The pattern of growth is made clear as farmland has given way to development. This growth has created opportunity, and spurred innovation across businesses and nonprofits. In response to the recession, much of the nonprofit sector has adopted the use of performance-management and technological innovations already commonplace in business. Innovative community organizations are harnessing trends like data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence to exponentially grow their impact. As partnerships between the private and public sector continue to strengthen in the form of corporate funding and information sharing, we will continue to witness improvements in prosocial outcomes.
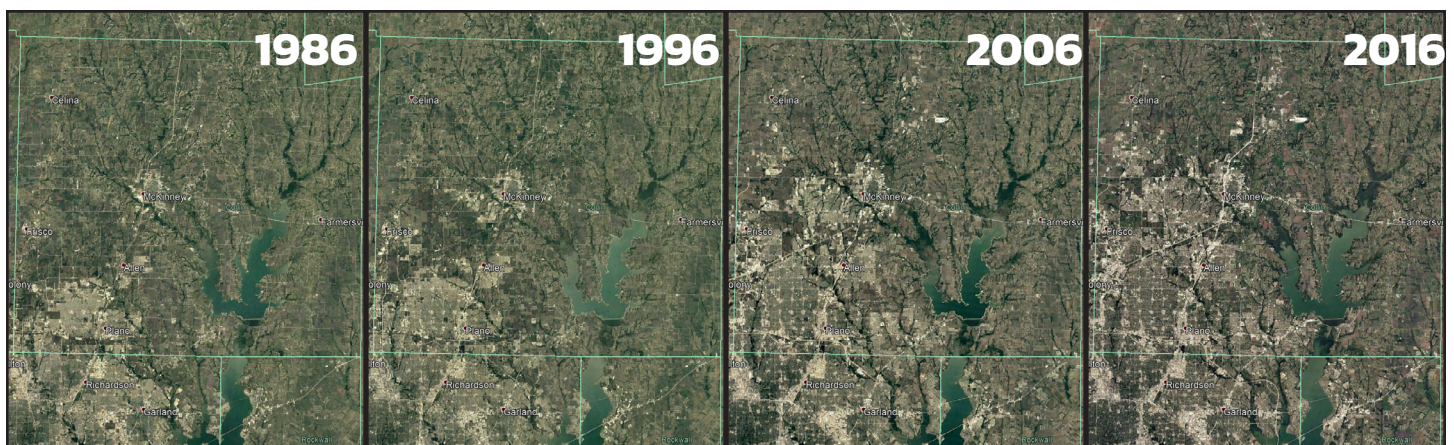

Figure 1. Aerial Photography of Collin County, Texas, Depicting Growth from 1986–2016. Source: Google Earth Pro

The Economic Landscape

Despite having outperformed the nation for the previous 4 years, Texas was not immune to the economic downturn of 2008. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, the recession that began in 2008 was worse than Texas recessions that began in 2001, 1985, and 1982. Figure 2 shows the change in unemployment North Texas experienced during this period. Other economic indicators saw only modest downturns.

Figure 3 shows the median household income trend over the same period. While median household income dipped in 2009 and 2010, and reached its lowest point in 2009 for Dallas County, and in 2010 for Collin and Tarrant counties, the overall trend has been positive. All three counties have seen a net increase in median household incomes since 2008 at a magnitude greater than that of the 2009 and 2010 losses.

The overall economic climate in North Texas has more than rebounded; according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the DFW area added more than 100,000 jobs in 2017. From November 2016 to November 2017, Dallas reported the highest job-growth rate in the

Unemployment Rate by County
2008-2016

Dallas County, 2010, 9.80%

Tarrant County, 2010, 9.70%

Dallas County, 2016, 4.80%

Tarrant County, 2016, 4.40%

Collin County, 2010, 6.80%

Collin County, 2016, 3.70%

Collin County — Dallas County — Tarrant County
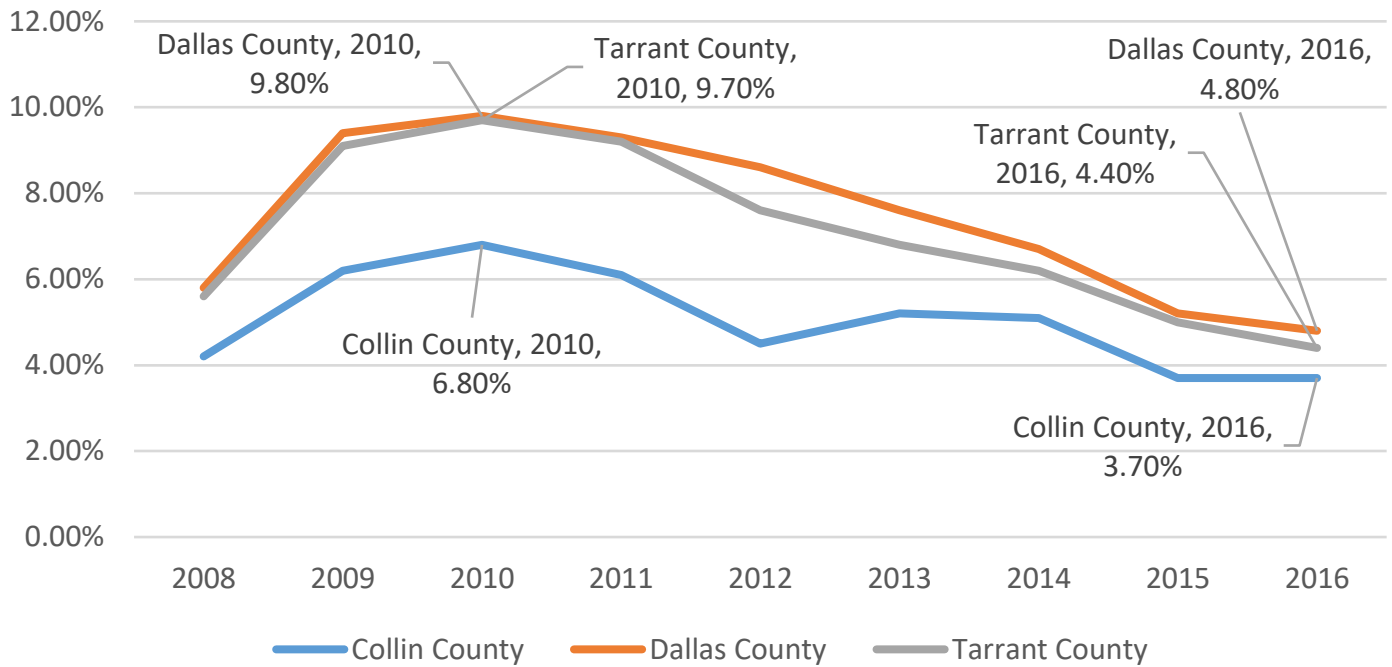
Figure 2. Unemployment Rates by County, 2008–2016.

Median Household Income by County
2008-2016

Thousands

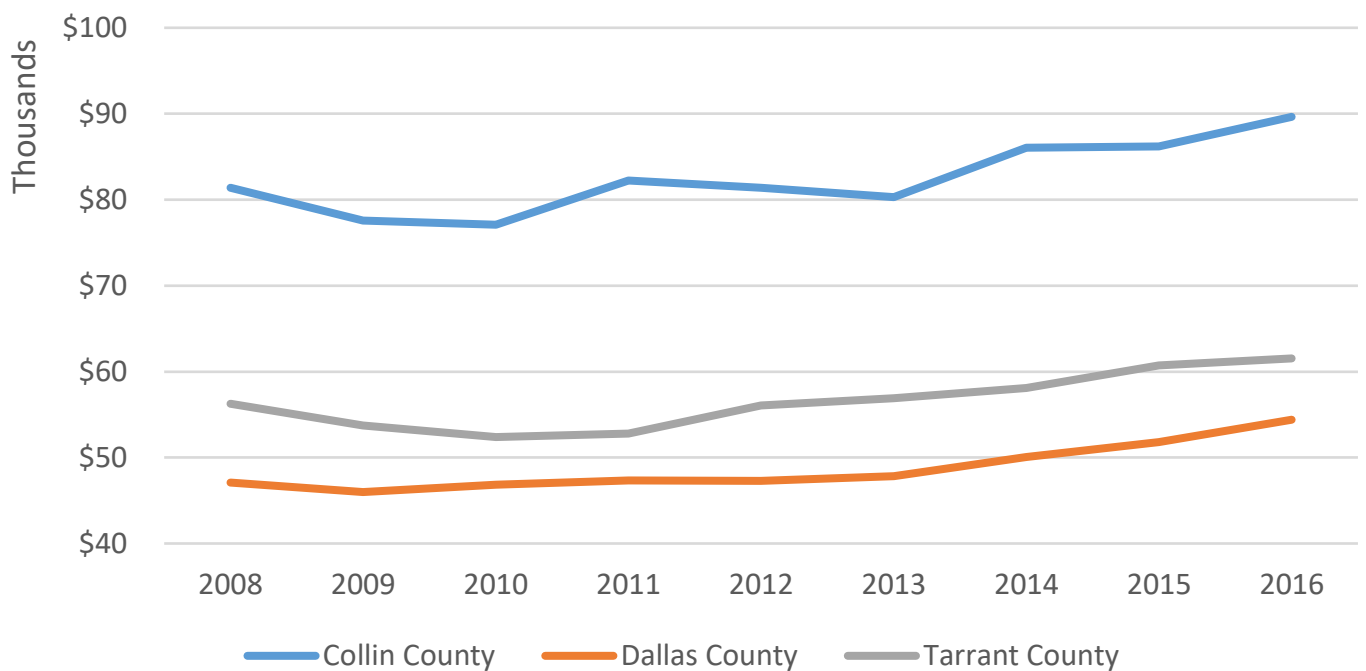Collin County — Dallas County — Tarrant County

Figure 3. Median Household Income by County, 2008–2016

4

nation and the most jobs added for that period.[1] Moreover, North Texas—particularly Collin County—has successfully attracted major corporate offices to the region. In addition to existing major corporations like AT&T, ExxonMobil, and Southwest Airlines, Capital One, Toyota North America, State Farm, and Liberty Mutual have established offices there.[2] Dallas is also one of a handful of cities outside the coastal hubs to see considerable growth in tech jobs—especially those related to banking and finance—auto manufacturing, and retail.[3] Overall, economic conditions in North Texas have returned to the boom that preceded the 2008 recession with an influx of new companies and considerable job growth.

Economic Change and Nonprofits

While the demand for social services increased during the recession, the financial crisis significantly hampered nonprofits' ability to meet that demand by depressing traditional funding sources. A GuideStar survey conducted early in 2009 found that more than half (52%) of nonprofits surveyed reported at least a modest decrease in the total amount of contributions received. Among those who saw decreases, 34% reported a decrease in foundation grants, and

Changes in Private and Corporate Grantmaking 2009-2012
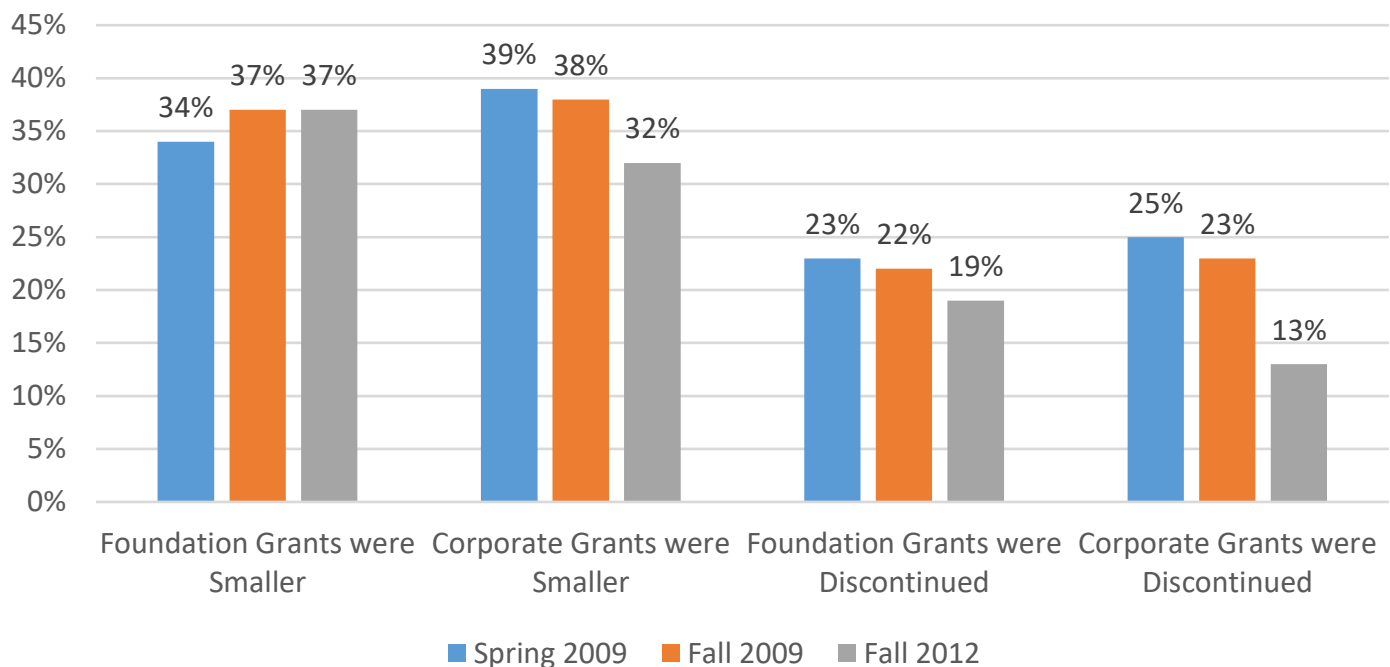
Figure 4. Changes in Private and Corporate Grant Making, 2009–2012.

1   Hoopfer, E. (2018, January 11). New Data Shows DFW's Job Market Is the Best in the Country. Dallas Business Journal.

2   Carlisle, C. (2018, January 9). "PMRG: Dallas-Fort Worth Still Has One Big Relocation on the Horizon." Dallas Business Journal.

3   Rugaber, C. (2017, December 23). "A Decade Since the Great Recession, Thriving Cities Have Left Others Behind." The Boston Globe.

39% reported decreases in corporate grants. A staggering 1 in 4 nonprofits reported the loss of at least one corporate grant from the previous year.[4] Figure 4 shows that this loss in both private and corporate grant making continued throughout 2009 and 2012, with one third of surveyed nonprofits experiencing decreased funding from both private and corporate sources during that time.

Nonprofit Response

The onset of the recession and the ensuing decrease in traditional funding streams for nonprofits sparked a shift in the way nonprofits had operated to that point. Decreased funding availability meant they were facing tougher competition for fewer dollars. They needed to movement toward measurement and efficiency. As these new ideas have entered the nonprofit and philanthropy environment, many funders have updated their investment strategies and driven service providers to adapt to revised expectations.
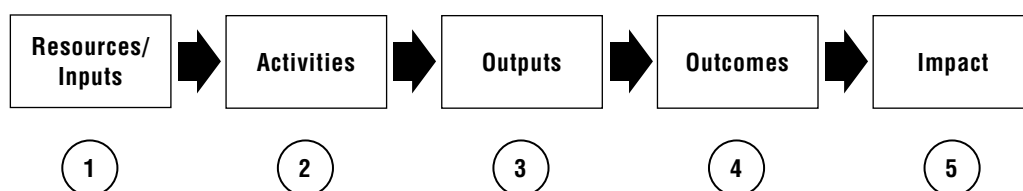

Figure 5. W. K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Illustration

find ways to become more efficient and make their programs more compelling to donors. For many nonprofits, efficiency improvement called for significant organizational redesign and collaboration to make better use of both internal and external resources. It also meant that organizations needed to get serious about adopting best practices for their programs and demonstrating their impact to funders and potential funders.[5]

Not surprisingly, major changes in the operations of many nonprofits coincided with economic recovery as a response to the revised expectations of funders still tentative about returning to pre-recession giving patterns. As a result, the model of philanthropy and social service delivery has transformed rapidly since 2010, and increasingly mirrors private-sector

The modernization of social sector program design began in 1998 with the publication of the Logic Model Development Guide by the W.K Kellogg Foundation. The logic model provides a visual representation of how a program functions, the theories that underpin it, why it works, the order of events in the program, and the desired outcomes.[6] Figure 5 depicts the basic logic model as taken from the Logic Model Development Guide (2004). The logic model is now a starting point for program design and the basis for efficient, evaluation-oriented program design. Ultimately, the nonprofit response to economically induced funding constraints centered around three trends: the adoption of a performance-management framework, the pursuit of collective impact, and a desire for social innovation.

---

4   McLean, C., & Brouwer, C. (2009). The Effect of the Economy on the Nonprofit Sector: October 2008–February 2009. GuideStar.

5   Morreale, J. C. (2011). The Impact of the "Great Recession" on the Financial Resources of Nonprofit Organizations. Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship.

6   W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). The Logic Model Development Guide.

While the move to logic models and deliberate design provided the groundwork for evaluation and performance management, the turning point came with the publication of Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes in an Era of Scarcity—a collaborative effort of McKinsey and Company, and Venture Philanthropy Partners. The key thesis of Leap of Reason was the combination of the logic model with the traditional business use of key performance indicators (KPIs) as a response to increasingly scarce resources. The authors of Leap of Reason argued that a good logic model is useful only within a performance-oriented culture and a clear organizational purpose. For a service provider, managing to outcomes means understanding how a logic model explains the achievement of its purpose and generates the data necessary to measure that achievement.[7]

A renewed interest in organizational design and the efficient allocation of resources led many organizations to seek strategic partnerships to maximize their impact and reduce the duplication of efforts. To that end, the Winter 2011 issue of the Stanford Social Innovation Review featured an article by John Kania and Mark Kramer that brought the term collective impact to the forefront of the social sector. In that article, Kania and Kramer asserted that the greatest extent of social change requires coordinated interventions across a broad range of social service sectors to achieve the so-called collective impact. While the argument for a collaborative and coordinated effort was not exactly new to the delivery of social services, Kania and Kramer argued that collective impact means more than collaborative service delivery, but also depends on a well-defined and centralized infrastructure responsible for coordinated performance management. Their article focused on Strive, a Cincinnati nonprofit dedicated to improving student performance, which coordinated the efforts of nonprofits and public agencies across three school districts, centralized their client tracking system, and measured their success against 53 indicators.[8]

Strive embodies the intersection of the highly structured collaboration Kania and Kramer proposed, and the business-like performance management principles proliferated in Leap of Reason. Taken together, these two publications ushered in a new paradigm for the funding and nonprofit communities, one that focuses on collaboration and performance measurement in an environment of reduced funding. By the end of 2012, The Chronicle of Philanthropy placed the terms, collective impact, data scientist, and data, on their list of top buzzwords of the previous 2 years, highlighting the strategies pursued by organizations seeking to improve efficiency and continue to compete for funds.[9]

The response to the recession has led not only to performance measurement, data use, and collective impact, but also to an entrepreneurial approach to both nonprofit management and nonprofit funding. Nonprofits have responded to increased competition by adopting novel approaches to old problems, leveraging new technology for public good, and adapting service delivery approaches from varying fields and applying them in new ways. Funders have encouraged these changes by establishing social innovation funds dedicated to recasting philanthropy as investment and driving new funding to novel programs with the potential for significant rewards.[10]

7   Morino, M. (2011). Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes in an Era of Scarcity. Venture Philanthropy Partners.

8   Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

9   Bernholz, L. (2011). Philanthropy Buzzwords of 2011. The Chronicle of Philanthropy.

10   Phills Jr., J., Deiglmeier, K., & Miller, D. T. (2008). Rediscovering Social Innovation. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

North Texas in Focus

Since the major shifts in program design and overall nonprofit behavior resulted directly from the scarcity of funds, it is natural that shifting behaviors of major funding agencies would drive local change. Two of the major funders driving change in North Texas have been Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) and the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. CFT is a traditional community foundation managing charitable assets, while the United Way largely disperses funds donated by individuals, corporations, and, especially, workplace campaigns.

In spring 2010, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, which funds programs in Dallas, Collin, Rockwall, and southern Denton counties, released a report outlining its goals and strategies for the next 10 years. Adopting the S.M.A.R.T. strategies framework, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas outlined a strategy for measuring progress toward community-wide goals, and using data to make investment and programming adjustments along the way.[11] They have also adopted a common-outcomes framework as part of their effort to measure the collective impact of their grantees. Since 2010, United Way has significantly altered their funding strategy, focusing on investments that make a measurable impact in the areas of education, income, and health.

CFT has also directly impacted performance measurement and the use of data among North Texas nonprofits through their Data-Driven Decision-Making (D3) Institute, which sought to develop the capacity within local nonprofits to use data to improve their programming. The Institute, which operated from 2012 to 2015, assisted agencies both in using public data to improve program design and funding requests, and in collecting and using program data to make mid-program course cor-

rections. The D3 Institute served 46 nonprofits across North Texas, especially in Dallas, Collin, and Tarrant counties.[12]

In response to such advancements in technology and the resulting spikes in demand for technical labor, Capital One launched the Future Edge Initiative—a $150 million investment into education and community organizations. This strategy has made a direct impact on North Texas, and its emergence as a hub of technology and innovation. By developing pertinent digital skills in the workforce, facilitating the growth of small business owners and entrepreneurs in the digital age, and providing individuals with money-management tools to help them invest for the future, Capital One's Future Edge Initiative is contributing significantly to the changing landscape of businesses and communities

The trends identified in this report can be divided roughly into two categories, Data-Driven Innovation and Innovative Service Delivery.

Data Driven Innovation is used for the following forms of impact: collective, lifelong, and predictive. As described earlier in the report, collective impact is the systematic coordination across different service providers to achieve the best possible outcomes for shared clients. Lifelong impact refers to programs that aim to improve outcomes that occur in a future far beyond the time they are working with their clients. These programs are often early childhood education and other early childhood development programs. Predictive impact aims to predict the needs and outcomes of clients before they even complete their time in a program using available data about them. Of all the trends mentioned, predictive impact is the one that relies the most on contemporary technological trends.

---

11   United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. (2010). Final Report to the Blue Ribbon Commission.

12   Communities Foundation of Texas. (2018). Data-Driven Decision-Making (D3) Institute. CFTexas.org

Innovative Service Delivery refers to program development aimed toward traditionally neglected populations or the use of technology to deliver programs in ways that were not previously possible. This report divides programs with innovative services into the following categories: fostering women in STEM and entrepreneurship, technological skill development and career placements, (other) underserved populations, and innovative uses of mobile technology. Women in STEM and entrepreneurship programs aim to increase representation of women in these fields through mentorship, education, and other forms of guidance. Technological skill development and career placement programs aim to create pipelines out of poverty and into growth careers by training groups that do not have access to higher education. Programs aimed at underserved populations are riding a wave of changing social attitudes toward groups that are often ignored, like the formerly incarcerated and people with disabilities, in the hopes of improving their life outcomes. Programs that are using innovating mobile technology aim to harness the ubiquity of internet-connected cellular devices to generate social good.

Data-Driven Innovation

Using Data for Collective Impact

The School Zone West Dallas

The Budd Center at Southern Methodist University (SMU) is the backbone of The School Zone in West Dallas. The School Zone is modeled largely after Strive in Cincinnati and the Harlem Children's Zone in New York. It is a partnership of more than 20 nonprofits and 10 schools serving children in West Dallas with the goal of helping at-risk students improve school performance, and prepare for college and careers. As the backbone organization, the Budd Center provides the data hub that facilitates efficient allocation of wraparound services, including afterschool care, tutoring, mentoring, parenting classes, and therapy.[13] The innovation provided by The School Zone is the centralized tracking of students within the network. By sharing data across geographically concentrated agencies, each service provider can better serve its clients, because it has a fuller knowledge of the other services each client receives. The potential for this data sharing is tremendous, as it can not only facilitate effortless referrals, but also allow service providers to tailor their services based on their performance and the needs reports of other local agencies with different skill sets and knowledge.

Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation

The potential impact of shared data lies not just in the domain of education. Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation (PCCI) has developed its Information Exchange Portal (IEP) to address the health and social needs of the community by connecting healthcare providers and health data with nonprofits for the coordinated care of their patients. The IEP promises to provide secure communication between medical providers and support services to verify eligibility and track service and referrals. PCCI offers additional innovations, including optional prescriptive analytics and artificial intelligence add-ons.[14] The potential for a shared data system with built-in automation and artificial intelligence includes the ability to predict future needs for participants, whether those needs are medical or social. PCCI's data platform merges the promise of integrated data sharing with predictive technology in a way that is currently unique within the social service sector.

13 Simmons School of Education and Human Development. (2018). The Budd Center: Involving Communities in Education. Retrieved from Southern Methodist University: https://www.smu.edu/simmons/Community/BuddCenter

14 Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation. (2018). Connected Communities of Care. Retrieved from http://www.pccinnovation.org/connected-communities-of-care/

Tyler Technologies: Connected Communities

While The School Zone and PCCI get most of their funding from foundation and government grants, corporate innovation still plays a key role in using data for public good in North Texas. Tyler Technologies, a Collin County-based technology cloud computing company, provides records management system (RMS) software to public agencies across the region and nationally. Public-sector agencies, such as police departments, utility companies, assessors, tax collectors, and local courts, use their platforms. Despite a significant portfolio, many public-sector agencies use other vendors to support their record-keeping needs. Tyler Technology's Connected Communities initiative seeks to create an environment for data exchange that overcomes the barriers of multiple vendor ecosystems.[15]

While most public agencies, such as police departments and court systems, have some type of RMS, the ability to share data across jurisdictions can be severely limited by differences among platforms. Connected Communities seeks to create a platform whereby agencies and jurisdictions can share data regardless of the original vendor platform. This capability would enhance the likelihood of collaboration across police departments or court systems; it could allow a police officer to pre-book an arrest at the county jail even if the jail and the police department use different records systems. It could even allow city planners, utility companies, and tax collectors and assessors to share data about specific properties in real time. What Tyler brings to the data ecosystem is not just the potential of a shared data platform, but the potential to share data despite a fractured data ecosystem.

Using Data for Lifelong Impact

Early Matters Dallas

Early Matters Dallas was the result of the first Early Childhood Strategic Plan for Dallas County, which was developed in conjunction with the Boston Consulting Group and the Dallas Independent School District (DISD). The long-term goals for the program are to achieve 80% of kindergarteners and 60% of third graders reading at grade level by 2025. To achieve these goals, the program is dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood education, and both the access to and demand for that quality of education. Moreover, their plan includes the provision of a continuum of care for children and their families from birth through third grade.[16]

The program ensures a continuum of care by identifying needed resources and services for children. As in other programs, data sharing is a key component in the provision of wraparound services, but the innovation of Early Matters Dallas is its longitudinal approach that seeks to impact the cradle-to-career pipeline by improving early childhood education that, in turn, improves future third-grade reading performance. Furthermore, their programing and data-sharing arrangement is linked directly to The Commit Partnership, which focuses on the years ensuing from early childhood to college completion.[17]

The Commit Partnership

By linking with the work of Early Matters Dallas, The Commit Partnership picks up the cradle-to-career continuum from third grade through college and career. The Commit Partnership is a coalition of 200 partners, includ-

15   Tyler Technologies. (2018). Creating Thriving Communities and a More Just Society. Retrieved from https://www.tylertech.com/solutions-products/transformative-technology/connected-communities

16   Early Matters Dallas. (2018). Steps to Acheive Our Vision. Retrieved from http://earlymattersdallas.org/our-work/action-plan/

17   The Commit Partnership. (2018). What We Do. Retrieved from Commit2Dallas: https://commit2dallas.org/early-childhood

ing public and private schools, universities, foundations, nonprofits, and businesses. Their focus is on systemic change that improves outcomes from early education through post-secondary completion.

One of the partnership's greatest tools has been their use of data to generate and promote strategic initiatives, and policies that improve the effectiveness of education in Dallas County. By sharing data from school districts, nonprofits, and government agencies, The Commit Partnership harnesses data not just for the collective impact of their partners, but also to have a lifelong impact on the clients served from early education through high school and college completion.[18]

Using Data for Predictive Impact

Pieces Technology

To help physicians make better informed holistic decisions to better address their patients' needs, PCCI has developed a cloud-based software called Pieces (TM). Supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the algorithms—developed by staff at the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, SMU, and PCCI—rapidly mine thousands of electronic medical records (EMRs). Furthermore, the algorithms use natural language processing and artificial intelligence to find and analyze patterns among patient records. This method of analysis makes it easier and more efficient to combine social and medical data to understand possible causes of health problems holistically. In one study, researchers used EMR data along with data from air-quality monitors, Google searches, and tweets to identify and predict asthma-related visits at Parkland Hospital.[19]

Innovative Service Delivery

Fostering Women in STEM Careers and Entrepreneurship

The Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at UT Dallas

The Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) is part of the Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas, and is dedicated to educating and empowering students and alumni in the pursuit of innovative new business ventures. Among IIE's programs is Innovate(her), which aims to educate women about technology, finance, and entrepreneurial strategies. The program is funded by Capital One and brings lessons in technology, design thinking, financial management, and developing a personal brand to young women in middle and high school. The program's 2017 Girls Going Places Conference brought in 100 middle and high school students.[20]

The Dallas Entrepreneur Center

The Dallas Entrepreneur Center (DEC) is a nonprofit manager of coworking centers established to help local entrepreneurs through education and mentorship programs. The DEC provides its members access to more than 1,000 mentors to provide key advice to help them launch their ventures. The DEC received a $600,000 grant from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 2017 to help establish three locations in Southern Dallas: The RedBird Entrepreneur Center in Oak Cliff and centers at the Univer-

18   The Commit Partnership. (2018). About Us. Retrieved from Commit2Dallas: https://commit2dallas.org/about-us

19   Ram, S., Zang, W., Williams, M., & Pengetnze, Y. (2015). Predicting Asthma-Related Emergency Department Visits Using Big Data. IEEE Journal of Biomedical and Health Informatics, 1216-1223.

20 The University of Texas at Dallas Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. (2018). 2016-2017 Annual Report. Retrieved from The University of Texas at Dallas https://innovation.utdallas.edu/about/2016-2017-annual-report; see also The University of Texas at Dallas Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. (2018). Innovate(her). Retrieved from The University of Texas at Dallas: https://innovation.utdallas.edu/girls-going-place

sity of North Texas at Dallas and Paul Quinn College. The DEC boasts a number of corporate sponsors, including Capital One, Mary Kay, and American Airlines, as well as the Dallas Regional Chamber and the Dallas Morning News.

Over the years, the DEC has done considerable work to support female entrepreneurs. In 2015, it hosted a Startup Weekend featuring female entrepreneurs pitching their business ideas, as well as a Women Entrepreneur Summit that included female business leaders from organizations such as Cisco and the 1776 Startup Incubator.[21] In 2017, they partnered with Mary May to host the Women's Entrepreneurship Summit to provide education and networking for women business leaders.[22]

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas: STEM Center of Excellence

Girl Scouts is dedicated to developing skills in young women that will prepare them for the changing world that calls for greater skills in STEM fields. To that end, the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas, in partnership with private foundations and corporate sponsors such as Ericsson and Texas Instruments, have created a 92-acre STEM Center of Excellence near downtown Dallas. The center provides opportunities for girls to take part in robotics, coding, chemistry, and other science fields through field trips, overnight camps, and council-led workshops. The goal of the program is to develop young women equipped with the confidence to address gender disparities in STEM fields, and they report that 86% of girls who participate are more interested in STEM fields as a result.[23]

Tech Skills and Job Placement

NAF Future Ready Labs

Part of Capital One's Future Edge Initiative, NAF Future Ready Labs helps individuals gain the skills, tools, and resources needed to succeed in a modern, digital economy. The program is designed to provide work-based learning and mentoring to participating students, and Capital One has provided internships to more than 70 North Texas students. The program allows high school students to apply their education in a unique environment with committed corporate professionals. NAF Future Labs represents a commitment by Capital One and local education partners, such as the University of Texas at Dallas, to further developing North Texas as a national technology hub.[24]

NPower

NPower is a nonprofit organization that connects job-seekers—particularly young adults and veterans—in technology fields to potential employers. NPower provides free technical training through four programs ranging from 8 to 26 weeks. The educational and certification programs are a blend of in-class instruction and paid apprenticeships. Programs are tailored to opportunities in entry-level IT roles, cybersecurity, and cloud computing. Program participants also receive postgraduate job-placement services, personal-development training, the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certification, and mentorship from senior-level IT professionals and alumni. The program prioritizes applicants who are 18 to 25years old, and military veterans over 21 who

---

21 Techstars. (2017). Dallas Startup Weekend: Women's Edition. Retrieved from http://communities.techstars.com/usa/dallas/startup-weekend/5911https://wedallas.splashthat.com

22 Mary Kay Inc. (2017). Women Leaders Converge in Dallas for Wntrepreneurship Summit. Retrieved from https://newsroom.marykay.com/en/releases/women-leaders-converge-in-dallas-for-entrepreneurship-summit

23 Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. (2018). STEM Center of Excellence. Retrieved from http://www.gsnetx.org/en/Giving/Give/stem-center-of-excellence.html

24 NAF. (2017). Capital One Joins NAFTrack Certified Hiring. Retrieved from https://naf.org/news_articles/capital-one-joins-naftrack-certified-hiring

fall within 200% of the federal poverty level. Key underwriters include Accenture, Deloitte, Boeing, and Dell Technologies.

Per Scholas

Per Scholas is a nonprofit organization with roots in the South Bronx in 1995. It aims to bridge the digital divide by increasing access to technology and technical education among marginalized groups. Per Scholas offers a free training program focusing on developing basic IT skills to people of color and women. Through a 10-week course, students learn skills necessary for jobs in IT help desk support, operations, software testing, and project management. Per Scholas prioritizes applicants who receive public benefits, or have minimum-wage or low-wage jobs. Students also have the option to work toward CompTIA A+, Net+, Security+, and Cisco Certified Network Associate certifications. Key partners include Capital One, Barclays, and Google.

Adaptations for Underserved Populations

Café Momentum

Cafe Momentum opened in 2011 as a series of monthly pop-up dinners featuring distinguished local chefs and a staff of at-risk youth. Cafe Momentum hires interns who have served time at juvenile facilities and trains them through an immersive 12-month paid program post-release. Case managers work to support interns' development holistically through financial literacy, mental health support, educational assistance, parenting classes, and professional development. Notable supporters include Dallas Social Venture Partners and Capital for Kids.

New Friends New Life

New Friends New Life (NFNL) is a nonprofit stemming from a local church group. NFNL provides "access to education, job training, interim financial assistance, mental health and spiritual support" for women and children who are victims of sex trafficking. Many victims are trafficked at a young age and, therefore, have worked almost entirely or solely in the sex industry. Studies on successful victim rehabilitation observe the importance of job training and the development of professional skills in preventing relapse.[25]

Through their Second Chance Jobs Program, NFNL assigns career counselors to beneficiaries and gives them access to GED prep, college counseling, computer skills training, pre-employment classes, and continuing education to encourage retention after employment. Notable partners include the PepsiCo Foundation and Ebby Halliday, Inc.

My Possibilities

My Possibilities (MP) is a continuing education program for adults with cognitive disabilities, particularly Down, Asperger or Prader-Willi syndrome, or head injuries, and those on the autism spectrum. To enroll in the program, parents or legal guardians of the beneficiary must apply and pay the $200 application fee. Once enrolled, the family of the beneficiary pays tuition for any of three types of programming. MP has recently merged with Launchability, a nonprofit job-placement service for adults with cognitive and learning disabilities. MP is also currently working to establish a $25 million university-style campus in Plano, Texas, to provide vocational training to high-school graduates with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Key donors include Alliance Data and the McDermott Foundation.

Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program

The Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) is a rehabilitation and reentry program that supports business ownership and professional development for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Research on prison education programs consistently finds

25 Macy, R. J., & Johns, N. (2011). Aftercare Services for International. University of North Carolina.

that prisoners who participate in educational programs or received certificates and degrees are less likely to return to prison.[26]

PEP's rigorous selection process sees a 5% acceptance rate. PEP has developed a 6-month in-prison "mini-MBA" program with curricula adapted from Harvard and Stanford Business Schools, and lectures from business executives in Dallas and Houston. Through a partnership with Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business, graduates receive a Certificate of Entrepreneurship after successfully completing the program. PEP also operates transitional housing facilities in Dallas and Houston that provide family counseling, financial support for business startup costs, basic health services, and transportation services and social events to encourage networking. Additionally, PEP operates a for-profit incubator named Communitas Ventures. Communitas Ventures helps to establish and grow startup businesses that can generate income for PEP and provide employment opportunities for graduates.

Achieve

Achieve, formerly the Citizens Development Center, works to empower Dallas individuals with disabilities. The Achieve Work Center Program provides vocational training, soft skills training, and placement services to individuals with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities who choose to work. Individuals with mental and physical disabilities are more than twice as likely to obtain employment if they have vocational training.[27] The program connects potential employees to local companies in need of workers to fulfill retail packaging orders and assemble materials for large conventions. "Achievers" include individuals 16 years of age or older. Since 2009, Achieve has also worked with veterans with documented disabilities. After receiving a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission in 2015, Achieve has expanded their services for veterans with disabilities. In FY 2016, Achieve placed 62% of Achievers with mental illnesses and 58% of those with physical disabilities in local employment. Key corporate partners include AT&T, Austin Commercial, and KPMG, LLP. Major donors include Clay Cooley Investments, TXU Energy, and Mary Kay, Inc.[28]

Innovative Use of Mobile Technology

SafeNight

SafeNight is a mobile phone app developed by Caravan Studios and AdvanceNet Labs that connects individual donors to service providers who provide shelter for victims of domestic abuse. The app is a fundraising tool, but its innovation is its ease of use and its ability to connect donors directly to a shelter's mission. Users can sign up to receive alerts when a local shelter is full but has an immediate need for a safe location for a victim. When this occurs, subscribed users receive notifications asking them if they would like to donate the cost of a hotel room for the night. AdvanceNet Labs covers its costs through business and philanthropic support, which means that users of the app know that 100% of their donations will go to cover the cost of a hotel room for victims in need.[29]

26 Clark, D. D. (1991). Analysis of Return Rates of Inmate College Program Participants. Albany, New York: State of New York Department of Correctional Services; see also Vacca, J. S. (2004). Educated Prisoners Are Less Likely to Return to Prison. Journal of Correctional Education, 297–305.

27 Dutta, A., Gervey, R., Chan, F., Chou, C.-C., & Ditchman, N. (2008). Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Employment Outcomes for People With Disabilities: A United States Study. Journal of Occupational Rehanilitation.

28 Citizens Development Center. (2016). 2016 Annual Report: Turning Disability Into Ability Every Day. Retrieved from http://achievedfw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Annual-report-2016-final-1.pdf

29 Wigglesworth, V. (2015, October). SafeNight App Comes to the Aid of Domestic Violence Victims in North Texas. The Dallas Morning News.

Skratch

Skratch is a type of job placement service for young adults, but its use of mobile technology makes it an innovative twist to the so-called gig economy. Skratch is a mobile phone app where individuals can post temporary jobs such as babysitting, house cleaning, and tutoring for young adults aged 14 to 20 years old. Jobs cannot exceed 3 hours in length; parental approval is required to register, and parents are alerted when jobs are claimed. The developers of the app state that it is aimed at youth who are busy with school and activities that make it difficult to find regular part-time jobs.[30]

Conclusion

Despite the impact of the 2008 recession, the last 10 years in North Texas have been a time of tremendous growth. Economic opportunity abounds in North Texas, and both the private and nonprofit sectors are responding to the ever-changing landscape. The setbacks of the recession led to innovation among nonprofits, especially with the adaptation of business practices, such as performance management, and the adoption of significant technological advancements. Technological trends such as data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence have already begun to reshape the world, and nonprofits are beginning to harness these innovations for increasing social good. Similarly, nonprofits have seized opportunities to adapt other less technical changes in the design and delivery of services. Ultimately, the continued partnership of public- and private-sector organizations through corporate funding and information exchange compounded by the proliferation of private-sector innovation will continue to be a driving force for social good.

30 Limon, E. (2018, January). Dallas-Based Skratch App Helps Busy Teens Find Jobs in Their Neighborhoods. The Dallas Morning News.

The Institute for
Urban Policy Research
at The University of Texas at Dallas

800 West Campbell Road, WT20
Richardson, Texas 75080-3021

(972)883-5430 voice   (972)883-5431 facsimile

Visit us on the Web! http://iupr.utdallas.edu

UTDALLAS
The University of Texas at Dallas