



The Cleveland Foundation

CHALLENGE

Create a new, comprehensive youth development initiative that greatly increases the Foundation's impact, then evaluate the success of that initiative in order to determine next steps.

APPROACH

Design new program, including its Theory of Change
Provide implementation guidance and on-the-ground support
Dive deep into results and lessons learned to inform decisions about the initiative's future.

OUTCOME

Armed with a solid program infrastructure, promising results, and a deep and thorough analysis of what worked well and where improvements are needed, The Cleveland Foundation can now expand confidently into a third phase of its initiative.

Create a New Grant Program and Prove it Worthy of Future Investment

DREAM BIG

To help improve youth development opportunities and outcomes in the Cleveland area, The Cleveland Foundation called on Putnam Consulting Group to help create one of its most comprehensive grant programs ever. Dubbed "MyCom" (My Commitment, My Community), the initiative brought together hundreds of public and private community stakeholders, including youth, to examine collected data about local needs, target specific areas for improvement and begin to show results.

ENGAGE EVERYONE

Working closely with Cleveland Foundation staff and board, Putnam created a theory of change, guided and supported the implementation for the program, and evaluated the results. Putnam supplied both brains and muscle, identifying stakeholders, organizing site visits to other cities to learn about their efforts, creating roles and providing support for MyCom partner agencies, supporting and facilitating meetings, and identifying and engaging national experts.

"We've received only positive feedback from our partners about Putnam's consulting services. They've helped me stay organized and ahead of the curve, while planning, implementing and measuring one of the most comprehensive initiatives that our foundation has ever launched."

- LISA BOTTOMS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION

"Putnam is a great to work with because they listen to us and to our partner organizations, as well as bring their own skills and resources to the table," says Lisa Bottoms, Program Director. "They have the ability not only to create an overall plan of action, but to pay attention to all the details and keep us on schedule."

INFORM INVESTMENT

As expected, the work was complex, expansive and sometimes hard to pin down. But after five years, it was time to decide

whether to continue funding this approach or pursue other avenues. The Cleveland Foundation once again called on Putnam. A team of five highly qualified consultants reviewed key documentation and data collected from the initiative, led four focus groups, and conducted a dozen in-person, in-depth interviews and nearly 40 telephone interviews. Through a series of carefully designed questions and comprehensive analysis, the Putnam team determined important accomplishments from the MyCom initiative, identified areas that needed more attention, and made a series of recommendations about ways to increase the initiative's impact for the communities it serves.

"The context of data is really important. Putnam understands that and is able to dive deeper and get to underlying meanings and factors that impact our work and the impact of our work on others," says Bottoms. "They came up with five areas we needed to work on, as opposed to 32. That made knowing what to do next and what direction to go really easy."



Putnam Consulting Group

Confident Giving • Dramatic Return

Putnam Consulting Group is a national, award-winning, philanthropy consulting firm. Since 1999, we've been honored to deliver results for foundations of all sizes and types. From developing powerful initiatives, to evaluating impact, to sharing the story of your success, we provide experienced consultation and guidance, logistics support and communications savvy to any or all of your grantmaking team or foundation leadership.

WHY PUTNAM?

Simply put, Putnam provides a full range of expertise and services to help philanthropic organizations achieve dramatic results with confidence and clarity. With our assistance, foundations and nonprofits visualize, design, implement, evaluate and share programs and ideas effectively and in ways that inspire.

Since our inception, we've worked with more than 50 foundations on more than 100 projects specifically designed to increase their impact and deliver dramatic results. Our clients include leading national foundations and smaller regional and local foundations that want to improve their practice and make a deeper difference in the communities they serve.

We don't just rely on ourselves. Instead, we spend time getting to know your organization, your values, your stakeholders and

your environment — in depth. And we seek the perspectives and opinions of and engage discussions among those who influence your success, from internal staff to external partners.

Our nimble, flexible approach means your project receives the constant attention and specialized expertise it deserves — every time.

“Putnam immediately understood the complexity of our work and distilled it into a variety of tools the that foundation is using to build support within the field.”

— RAFAEL LÓPEZ, FORMER ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

OUR LEADERSHIP



Kris Putnam-Walkerly is a recognized leader in philanthropic program design, implementation, evaluation and communication. She specializes in helping foundations embrace new and more effective

approaches to solving social problems. Her focus on actionable solutions and recommendations provide her clients with clear direction for maximum impact.

Kris is a master communicator, and has produced innumerable blogs, articles and essays that deliver meaningful, relevant

insights to the field. She has been quoted in the Washington Post, BusinessWeek and other media outlets. She helps her clients communicate their stories — through her vast network of contacts and Twitter followers — thereby enriching the collective wisdom in philanthropy.

Kris chairs the steering committee of the National Network of Consultants to Grantmakers, serves on the board of the Community Foundation of Lorain County and the advisory committee of the Foundation Center in Cleveland, and is a member of the Society for Advancement of Consulting.

LET US HELP YOU

DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

- Design grantmaking strategies and new funding initiatives
- Conduct environmental scans
- Create theories of change
- Engage stakeholders
- Pinpoint funding gaps
- Identify funding partners
- Incorporate best practices

ALLOCATE FUNDS WISELY

- Develop and manage the RFP process
- Identify and support intermediary organizations
- Train internal program leaders
- Manage and implement grant programs

EVALUATE IMPACT

- Assess evaluation needs
- Determine evaluation readiness
- Incorporate qualitative and quantitative measurement
- Conduct evaluations
- Translate evaluation results into clear recommendations

COMMUNICATE RESULTS

- Craft compelling case studies
- Build toolkits to support your issue
- Share lessons learned
- Circulate articles for newsletters or national press
- Produce videos that tell your story
- Present at board meetings or national conferences
- Post on various social media outlets
- Record podcasts
- Post blogs to increase exposure