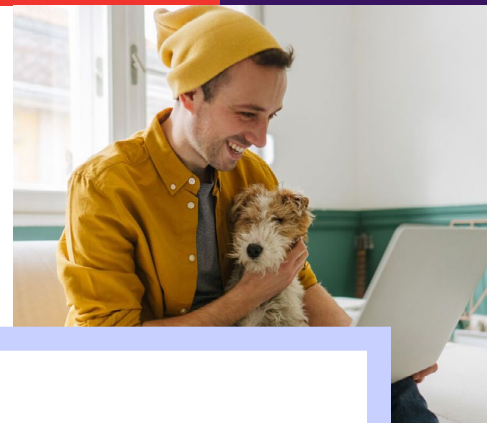
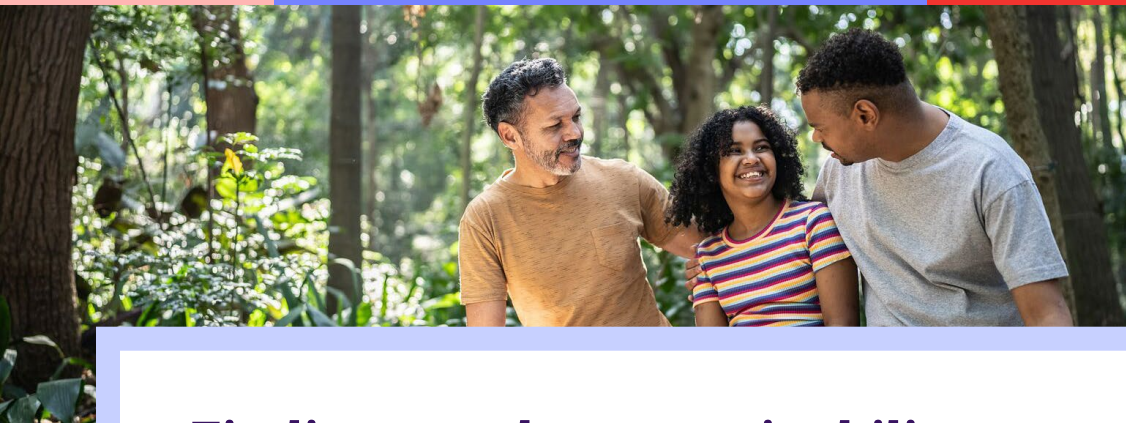


CASE STUDY

Northern Kentucky Funders' Group

A collective impact approach to driving bigger impact and building sustainable nonprofits.



Finding a path to sustainability in Northern Kentucky

“For many years, I’ve been searching for a way to help small nonprofits raise more money on their own, so that they are not so dependent upon grants,” Jean Mize, assistant to the president at the R.C. Durr Foundation, said. “The same nonprofits applied for our grants year after year, because there was no one else to apply to [in our region].” **To help find a solution, she did what she’d always done - she turned to her community.**

Jean and R.C. Durr Foundation had been thinking for some time about how to best bring fundraising capacity building to local Kentucky nonprofit organizations. “I knew our local nonprofits needed more than programmatic funding, but I wasn’t sure how to get started,” she shared. “I developed a lunch group with people from other organizations who were also focused on helping our nonprofits grow and invited Nancy [Grayson] to join. We knew that there had to be a way to help some of these smaller organizations increase their fundraising efforts.”

The R. C. Durr Foundation, Inc.



Horizon
COMMUNITY FUNDS

Nancy Grayson, president at Horizon Community Funds, was thrilled to get the call. “As a newer community foundation, we were looking for an opportunity to not only serve as a convener [in the community], but to make a real and meaningful impact beyond just traditional grantmaking.”

Jean and Nancy used these lunches to brainstorm. They were considering pooling their resources to hire a fundraising professional for their grantees when they learned about Jumpstart powered by Bonterra. “After I had an initial conversation with Jumpstart, I called Nancy and said, ‘I think I found the solution.’”

With the shared goal of building capacity and sustainability within Northern Kentucky’s nonprofit community, Horizon Community Funds, R.C. Durr Foundation, and Bonterra formalized a partnership in December 2019 to pilot Jumpstart. Five nonprofits began their engagement in February 2020.

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Getting started

After assessing both foundations' grantees, Jean and Nancy's hypothesis that fundraising capacity building would have the most impact was validated. The assessment revealed that most nonprofits lacked the basic skills and infrastructure to acquire, retain, and upgrade donors. Further, the organizations surveyed expressed that the fundraising assistance they did have access to was fragmented, time-consuming, and expensive—especially given that it, too, often fell short of the transformation they envisioned.

Results in hand, the R.C. Durr Foundation and Horizon Community Funds made a \$25,000 joint investment to fund the Jumpstart program for five nonprofits. "Our goal was to have the nonprofits raise at least \$5,000 so that they could fund it themselves the second year," Jean said. "The idea was that by year two, our nonprofits would have a more established fundraising strategy and the technology they needed to execute on it."

"We wanted to strengthen [our grantees'] development and meet them where they are, and to have a trusted resource through Jumpstart, who had the experience, data, and best practices," Nancy added. "I really loved the idea that each nonprofit in our cohort would have a coach to teach them fundraising best practices. After Jean and I discussed it, it was clear that this was a great way we could help our nonprofit partners create a bigger, long-term impact."



“

It was important to us that Jumpstart included some resources that were plug-and-play, but that they could also be tailored to fit specific needs. I really liked that personal approach, because as a newer community foundation we are very grassroots oriented, and many of our nonprofits are, too. Jumpstart met us right where we were and really built the culture of Northern Kentucky into the process.”

Nancy Grayson, Horizon Community Funds

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The result

Since the Northern Kentucky Funders' Group pilot program launched in February 2020, the world has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the nonprofit development landscape has shifted, leaving many nonprofits contending with budget shortfalls and an uncertain future.

Despite this, the Northern Kentucky Funders' Group pilot cohort leveraged Jumpstart's coaching and technology to shift their operations, engage donors virtually, and seize on a year of heightened individual giving throughout 2020. The initial \$25,000 investment from R.C Durr Foundation and Horizon Community Funds turned into \$563,342 in net-new revenue for participants, animating community-based philanthropy in Northern Kentucky at a critical moment for participating organizations.

"As a young foundation, we know that we won't be able to put a chicken in every pot," Nancy added. "Jumpstart is a great to help our community nonprofits shore up their fundraising so that they can be successful year after year." Nancy also found Jumpstart's data to be particularly helpful. "Having access to data from other communities was critically important to me, because we could extrapolate those lessons and apply them to Northern Kentucky, where they maybe hadn't been considered before."

"The initial fear I had was that Jumpstart was a way to sell Bonterra Donor Engagement's Guided Fundraising solution (formerly Network for Good), but that wasn't the case. The help that our cohort of nonprofits received is truly amazing, and there's no expectation that nonprofits use Guided Fundraising after the Jumpstart program concludes," Jean shared. "Jumpstart teaches nonprofits the skills that they need to soar."



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What happened next?

In sharing the outcomes and impact realized by their pilot cohort, Nancy and Jean were able to bring along three additional funding partners to support a new Northern Kentucky Jumpstart cohort in 2021. Along with the support of Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, and the Butler Foundation, 15 new organizations were given the opportunity to leverage the program to power their fundraising.

Meals on Wheels of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky

Meals on Wheels of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky provides services to 10,000 seniors across twelve counties in their region and is one of the largest providers of Meals on Wheels in the nation. On average, the program delivers 3,000 meals a day from their on-site kitchen and anticipate delivering 1.4 million meals this year alone. A pillar of the program is that when they deliver their meals, they also provide a wellness check on the individuals they serve to gauge their health and well-being. The program also offers pet support, providing the furry friends of seniors with food and veterinary vouchers, transportation to doctor appointments and the grocery store, and a personal financial management assistance.

When the pandemic hit, their need tripled overnight. “In the first few days of the shutdowns we served as many meals in one week as we typically would in a month,” Jennifer Steele, executive director of Meals on Wheels of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky, shared. “We could not have done this without the explosive growth in individual support that we experienced through the Jumpstart program. Prior to this, we were using a clunky PayPal donation mechanism on our website and had very little individual giving.” Jennifer and her team worked with their fundraising coach to increase individual giving by 174%, helping them to raise \$400,000 in 2020, surpassing their initial annual goal of \$64,000.



Increased
Individual Giving By
174%

Raised
\$336K
more than goal
in 2020

“The program truly revolutionized how we raise funds,” Kat Steiner, director of development, said. “Bonterra’s Jumpstart program made the transaction process easy and gave donors confidence in our organization. The communications and gift acknowledgment capabilities have been giant assets. I don’t know what we would have done without Jumpstart – it changed everything for the better. Jumpstart was exactly what we needed and got us to where we are today,” she shared.

“I truly believe that Jumpstart was the difference between seniors surviving this pandemic and not in some cases,” Jennifer said. The incredible impact Meals on Wheels of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky had on its community during the pandemic did not go unnoticed. Mackenzie Scott awarded them a \$4,000,000 transformational grant as a part [The Giving Pledge initiative](#).



We could never have done this without Jean and Nancy believing in us and inviting us to join Jumpstart. Now we’re really going to be able to transform how we serve seniors in our community.”





About Jumpstart

Jumpstart powered by Bonterra provides grantmakers with effective fundraising capacity building support for their grantees to create transformative change. The year-long program pairs nonprofits with a fundraising coach and the integrated technology needed to engage community, diversify revenue, and sustain their programs.

Learn more about how Bonterra's Jumpstart program helps grantmakers create transformative change within their communities.

Visit bonterratech.com to schedule a consultation.