

An Opportunity for Change



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

QUOTES COURTESY ALLYSON ALLEN • ADULT EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR AND SUSAN MINTZ • OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The City of Cambridge Office of Workforce Development (OWD) team was ready to make the change from Efforts to Outcomes® (ETO) to Touchpoints in their data and reporting system. Given the busy day-to-day operations of their employment programs and the challenges a municipal bureaucracy can present, it was a cost-effective and welcome relief to bring in Exact Change Strategies (ECS) as a partner in making the system upgrades. As a result, OWD has become more efficient in its data collection and reporting – and is actively exploring ways to leverage the potential of its system to reinforce staff performance and positive client outcomes.

“We felt instantly comfortable with ECS. They’re an ally, and it was more cost effective for us to have ECS provide support. Our relationship with them gives us peace of mind.”

OWD is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, across the river from the City of Boston, and serves residents 14 years and older. Their

programming includes free employment readiness, job search assistance, and short-term employment opportunities. With a team of 15 staff members, they directly serve 1,000 youth and 350 adults annually – and reach many more community members through events such as job fairs and coordinating with other local workforce development partners. ▶



Cambridge Employment Program provides individualized career counseling to support residents in achieving their employment goals.

Cambridge Works is a transitional jobs program for adults that combines temporary employment opportunities with intensive case management and training.

Key Annual Statistics About OWD

- Over **350** Cambridge residents enrolled in programs
- Over **100** job seekers are assessed for services
- Job fairs, workshops and other services reach an additional **100** job seekers
- Over **115** Cambridge residents find work through OWD services



“You get what you ask with ECS. They helped us clarify our ask and delivered what we needed. Last year, they got us up and running and functional. Now, we can move to the next level. They made our work easier for sure.”



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An Awaited Change

The City of Cambridge as a whole had been using the ETO system since 2005 and information on OWD programs was under an umbrella of programs and services that also included the city’s Homeless Management Information System. When the city discontinued their ETO contract for other programs, OWD was left with a decision: to upgrade the ETO system to the latest Touchpoints® model on a limited budget or choose new approach or system entirely.

OWD decided that it was time for the upgrade, and ECS was immediately helpful to their leadership team. ECS provided guidance on the scope of the planned project, including how OWD could improve reporting capacity and increase system efficiency during the upgrade. By clarifying exactly what services OWD did and did not need to reach their immediate goals, ECS was able to offer a targeted and budget-sensitive approach. ▶

“ECS was persistent and patient with us. Data isn’t our full time job; we have many competing priorities. They were always gracious, good natured, and relaxed. No matter how urgent something was.”

“The [Touchpoints] tool has much greater capacity than we can make use of right now. The ECS team has the brains, expertise, and depth of experience to create short cuts for us. We don’t have time to get up to speed on it all.”

“We very quickly came to trust the ECS team. Their charm and experience was the glue that held the whole project together.”

New Possibilities

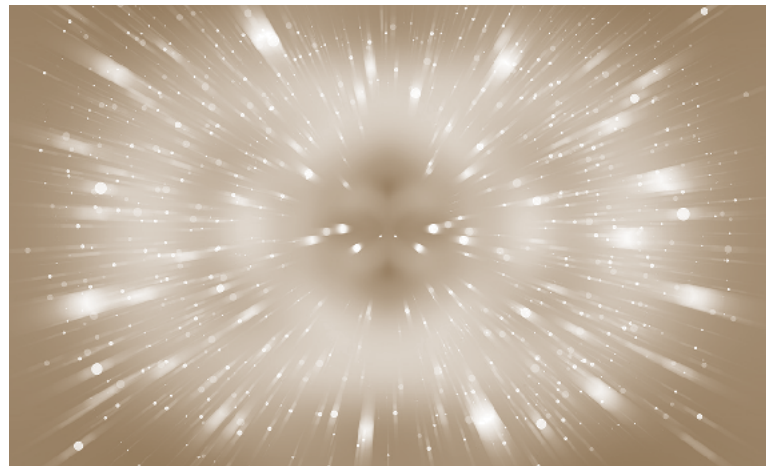
Throughout the course of the project ECS continued to offer a wealth of knowledge as well as guidance, encouragement, clarification, and even humor to sustain momentum. The result was a Touchpoints data system that could strategically meet the needs of OWD programs and staff. ECS was able to streamline past kinks and challenging aspects of the system as well as automate common reporting functions and create a user-friendly experience.

As this first project together came to a close, OWD knew that they had identified had a trusted partner in ECS that they could rely on well into the future. While the first step was to create a functional tool, OWD leadership does not intend to stop there. They are aware of infinite possibilities of performance management and now envision opportunities to be a data-driven organization in ways that will benefit both staff and clients daily. They want to go deeper and further in their work with ECS, and ECS is prepared to support them in carrying their vision forward. ●

“Reporting is a breeze now! We have one report for budget goals, another for a funder. Those work at the click of a button now. We desperately needed those. ECS helped us work out the kinks.”

“Now, we’re thinking about what tools and data staff can use with clients to motivate them to have better outcomes. And we’d love to get staff tools so they can better manage their own work.”

“The ECS team is highly competent, responsive and very easy and pleasant to work with. You can’t really ask for more than that! They’re worth every penny.”



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SPECIAL THANKS Susan Mintz, Allyson Allen, and everyone at the City of Cambridge Office of Workforce Development.

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