

Enhancing Capacity by Elevating Performance

RAINBOW SERVICES

QUOTES COURTESY JANE DION • DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND FUND DEVELOPMENT

Rainbow Services (Rainbow) aims to end the cycle of abuse and violence in families through a trauma-informed and holistic approach. Their reach spans Los Angeles County, California and they are the primary service provider for anyone affected by the cycle of domestic violence in the South Bay area. They began a partnership with Exact Change Strategies (ECS) focused on creating various custom reports, a partnership that naturally grew. With the support and guidance of ECS, they were able to leverage current skills in program evaluation as well as enhance their capacity for performance management. By building custom reports and refining their data system processes, they have positioned themselves to meet the requirements of their current funders and attract new ones as well as engage staff of all levels in evaluating the impact of services.

“ECS was responsive and helpful right away. They knew how to make our [data] system a performance tool. They absolutely know what they’re talking about and have a long track record of experience.”



- **Over 400 families a year served in person and over 3,000 calls a year to the 24-hour hotline**
- **\$3M budget from private foundations, government contracts, and hundreds of individual donors**
- **43 employees**
- **96% of families served are living in poverty**

Rainbow offers a range of prevention and intervention services to individuals, families, and the greater community. This includes shelter, counseling, and housing options to help survivors transition to safety, stability, and independence. They also work to raise awareness about domestic violence through education and outreach initiatives in order to end the cycle of violence. They are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1983. ▶

“The ECS team has been great to work with; their expertise in the ETO system has been obvious throughout our projects. They have a skilled team and a network of contacts as resources. And they’re super friendly, responsive and easy to ask questions to. Because of their direct service experience, they can explain technical concepts and make the system very accessible, less intimidating for staff who are new to working with database software.”

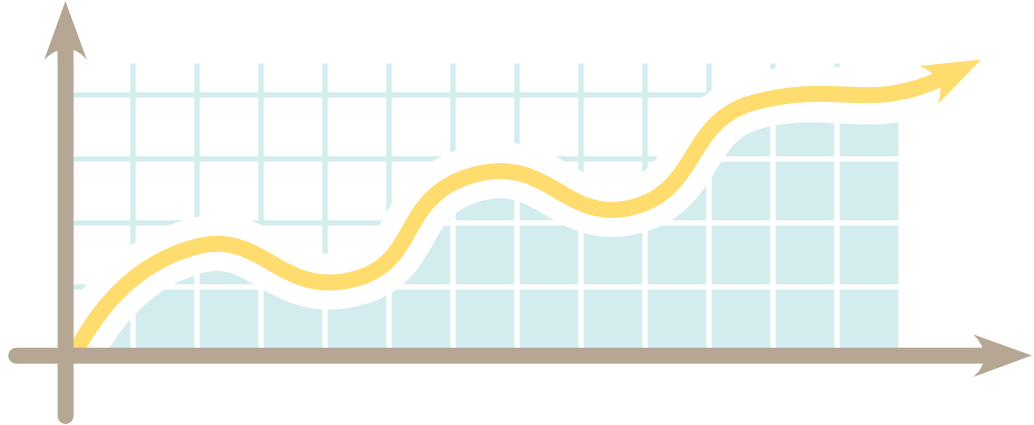
“We’re committed to being a learning organization, which requires putting useful tools in the hands of staff of all levels. Having a solid data system – and guidance from ECS to be sure it continues to meet our needs -- is making that a reality.”

A Learning Curve, A Learning Organization

One of Rainbow’s ongoing strategic goals is to take a data-driven approach with everything that they do. As a learning organization, they aim to keep data central to day-to-day decision-making and use data over time to track their progress toward longer-term goals.

However, their original data system was not able to keep pace with the growth of their services and initiatives as well as with the progress of their field. It had become inefficient and was limiting their ability to create reports and track performance across all programs. Prior to reaching out to ECS, the leadership at Rainbow joined with other domestic violence services organizations in California to purchase and build an Efforts to Outcomes® (ETO) data system geared toward their needs.

This collaboration has been instrumental in advancing Rainbow’s data capacity and collection processes, but it was not a permanent solution. While the leadership at Rainbow had skills in program evaluation, they did not have the technical knowledge or internal capacity to continue to update the ETO system and reporting options in response to evolving needs and goals. ▶



“We knew we’d have a steep learning curve, as database administration is a skillset that we hadn’t hired for previously, and it was scary starting out with a completely new system. It’s still a work in progress, and we’ve already found it to be extremely valuable.”



LAZYLANA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“How we measure and convey our impact is huge for fundraising.”

Visionary Partners and Coaching

Initially, Rainbow hired ECS for a time-limited project to adapt a few specific report templates in response to new requirements from a government funder. Rainbow had an urgent need, and ECS was an immediate fit with an extensive background in the ETO system as well as direct experience working with government funding reports. ECS was able to address their needs quickly and support their learning at the same time.

From the start, Rainbow’ leadership had the foresight to leverage their partnership with ECS not only to complete practical deliverables, but to enhance internal capacity as well with regard to reporting and data analysis. They asked that ECS incorporate training, technical assistance, and guidance for staff into the project, pausing throughout the process to explain the technical steps involved so that leadership could learn along the way. Additionally, ECS was able to provide feedback and assistance in ETO design and content to ensure quality data collection and reporting. ►

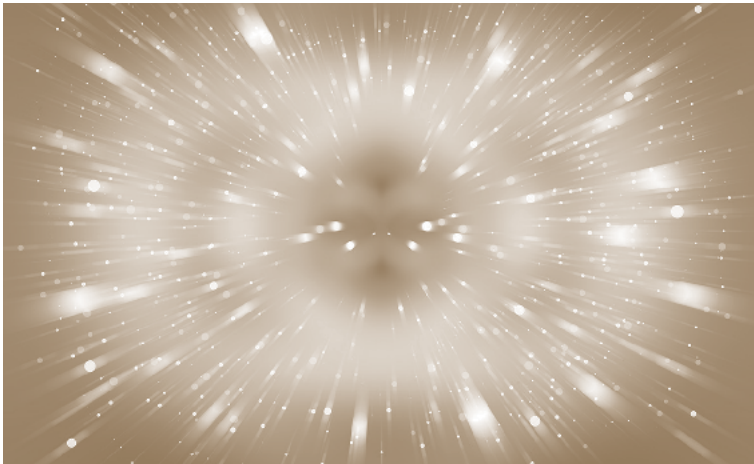
“I asked ECS to spend the time with me – not just do the work on their own, but explain the background and process and coach me so I could learn. They’ve been really available to troubleshoot when we have questions or issues, teaching as they go.”

“It’s a huge stress reliever for our staff to have ECS as a partner. For a nonprofit of our size, it’s unrealistic to have someone on staff with the level of technical experience that ECS can offer. I expect to have a long-term relationship with them and continue to learn.”

New Skills, Perspective, and Vision

The partnership has proven invaluable. As a result of their work with ECS, Rainbow has become more proactive in its data collection and analysis. ECS helped them to not only update elements of their system, but provided them with a blueprint to anchor their current and future endeavors in a thoughtful performance management approach. While initially hired to create custom reports for a funder deadline, ECS was able to offer a unique perspective that took Rainbow’s reporting and data collection closer to the vision of data-driven decision making. With this partnership, Rainbow’s leadership can envision their organization’s strategic goals and identify the steps and indicators necessary for success.

Rainbow has also experienced key growth inspired by their improved data reporting. Staff are becoming increasingly adept at data entry, use, and analysis as it fits into their daily work – from client services to fund development. While it can be overwhelming at times to have access to so much information, ultimately it has been the catalyst for critical realizations and conversations about program performance and progress. Rainbow also made the decision to invest in a new staff position, hiring an employee who could focus solely on data system management and data analysis for the organization. This was something that initially seemed impossible, but as they internalized key performance goals, it became a priority. The organization has been able to expand their capacity while continuing an ongoing partnership with ECS for support as they go. Now, Rainbow is becoming a dynamic and skilled learning organization positioned toward the future. ●



FRACALANI/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Healthy Connections Build Healthy Communities



ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

SAFETY

COMPASSION

EMPATHY

FUN, LAUGHTER, HUMOR

INTEGRITY

NON-JUDGMENT

RESPECT

During Rainbow Services' 2015-2016 Fiscal Year:

- **Emergency Shelter** provided immediate safety and protection for 50 families and pets.
- **Transitional Housing Program** provided up to 12 months of supportive housing and health and wellness services for 25 families.
- **Community Resource and Education Centers** helped 311 families.
- **24-hour Spanish/English Hotline** responded to 3,228 crisis and referral calls.
- **Safe Harbor Legal Services Program** served 215 families
- **66 Volunteers and Interns** gave 5,214 hours of their time
- **Outreach And Community Awareness Team** made over 50 presentations and collaborated with 30 community agencies.



PHOTO COURTESY: RAINBOW SERVICES