

Demonstrating Impact

Club attendance linked to increased school attendance



Source: <https://bgcrochester.org/>

CASE STUDY: Boys & Girls Club of Rochester uses data to show impact

For over 40 years, the Boys & Girls Club of Rochester, NY has worked to improve outcomes for area youth. They provide youth development programs that enable young people to acquire the skills and qualities needed to become responsible citizens and leaders.

"Being able to point to this evaluation and tell our funders and our community that we are making a difference is huge."

*Dwayne Mahoney
Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of Rochester*

Executive Summary

An evaluation determined that students who attend afterschool activities of the Boys & Girls Club of Rochester attended school significantly more than students who were not Club members. In other words, compared to a matched control group, Club members who attended the Boys & Girls Club of Rochester attended approximately one week more of school.

Measured outcomes included:

- School attendance was on average 7 days more
- Students received additional 40 hours of school instruction

Challenges

Out-of-school programs have often struggled with defining their role and contribution to youth success.

Demonstrating results is not the difficult business it once was, and simple data collection is no longer enough to satisfy funders. “It’s no secret that there is a demand on organizations to ‘demonstrate outcomes’ – or effectiveness, or impact, or whatever you want to call it,” said Mahoney.

For human service organizations, the struggle can come from operating too many disconnected data systems or having sporadic and duplicated data. Others find that their data, though recorded, is not accessible.

“We found that we just couldn’t get the data we entered back out of our old system quickly, or in a fashion that coincided with what our funders were asking for,” explained Mahoney.

How COMET Helped

While the City of Rochester has a high poverty rate, ranking 7th in the nation for child poverty, it also has a history of philanthropy with a strong culture of giving. However, generosity comes with obligations and funders want real results.

In addition to tracking program and activity attendance, COMET users can assess summer learning loss, track report card grades, and evaluate the progress club members make in their programs. That data becomes useful information that organizations can report on and use to demonstrate and improve outcomes for their programs and members. The relationship between attendance and outcomes is vital to demonstrate impact.

Even organizations that do not have data-sharing agreements with districts can still link their activities and academic success with COMET’s help.

“We have always been able to demonstrate the need here in Rochester, but demonstrating our ability to get results was a different story.”



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Results and Future Plans

“We were users of COMET before joining the Boys & Girls Club of America NYOI partnership and will continue to be,” Mahoney said. “I think having local evidence collected by COMET will help us as we seek donations to our organization; it’s certainly just the beginning.”

Questions? Call 585-673-3200

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