PMIEF and True Colors Fund Address Youth Homelessness Through Project Management

The PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) supports nonprofit organizations building their capacity by helping their professionals acquire and apply project management knowledge to overcome challenges in their everyday work. The foundation recognizes the value of project management as a business solution, so it supports nonprofit professionals’ project management training to ensure they become more efficient and more effective in their delivery of services. This strategy allows PMIEF to touch people’s lives worldwide by making a difference in the organizations on which they rely for support.

PMIEF’s 2017 grant to the True Colors Fund (TCF) for the “PMIEF – TCF PM for Communities Initiative” advances these efforts to equip what the foundation terms “PM Capable Nonprofits,” which is one of its three pillars of focus. Founded in 2008 by Grammy, Emmy, and Tony Award-winning singer, actress and librettist Cyndi Lauper because of her personal commitment to equality, TCF strives to improve the lives of the most marginalized youth in the United States, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ); racial/ethnic minorities; immigrants; and at-risk as defined by juvenile justice and foster care systems. The organization is especially committed to ending homelessness among these vulnerable populations so they can lead happy, productive, fulfilling lives.

The grant equips both TCF staff and its community coalitions across the United States with project management competencies to innovate projects to eradicate youth homelessness. Specifically, the funding has delivered project management fundamentals training to TCF staff to enhance their practice and to prepare them to train community coalitions nationwide.
Doing so will enable the coalitions to devise comprehensive, actionable project plans to mitigate youth homelessness where they live. Individuals representing entities such as faith-based organizations, libraries, local legislative offices, police departments, schools and small businesses comprise the coalitions.

The initiative strategically targets coalitions in Dallas, Texas, USA; Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA; and Pinellas County, Florida, USA. TCF will provide them ongoing technical assistance to apply project management to their work as they ideate and execute their project plans. In addition, the organization is developing a Project Management for Communities Toolkit that will provide practical guidance on how the 10 project management Knowledge Areas specified in A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) – Fifth Edition are applicable to designing community-based solutions to this pervasive problem. TCF will integrate the Toolkit into its work with the coalitions.

Moreover, TCF will create a two-hour, asynchronous, online course based on the Toolkit that consists of 10 multimedia lessons comprised of three modules each. It will make the course available online via its True Colors Learning Community.

"As a social worker, I’ve realized there are synergies between project management and community organizing,” says Christa Price, LMSW, TCF associate program director. “By connecting those dots, we have been able to formalize our strategic planning process and tailor resources and trainings to meet the needs of each community coalition we work with. By empowering communities to use project management tools and techniques, we’re building systems to help youth move out of homelessness.”

PMIEF’s partnership with TCF reflects a shared, staunch commitment to work both with and through others to improve people’s lives. This includes surmounting challenges that create difficult circumstances for individuals by devising project management-rich solutions to them.

“Our small team has been able to accomplish so much because of support from PMIEF,” explains Joe Moran, PMP, TCF chief creative officer and chief of staff. “The project management training we received gave our team a strong foundation from which we were able to optimize our internal processes. We’re now able to transfer this knowledge to communities across the country as they implement plans to prevent and end youth homelessness. The grant completely changed how we work as an organization.”