

Bank Funding



How the St. John Center for Homeless Men deployed a new fundraising strategy with the right tools to tell their CRA story.

Searching for the best way to highlight their impact and share their message with potential bank supporters, St. John Center for Homeless Men approached findCRA for help. Through findCRA's Certification process, St. John Center gained the knowledge and tools they needed to kick-start a new fundraising strategy with financial institutions in their community. Within just a few months, their new approach paid off.

Given their focus on low-income people and areas and the community services they provide, St. John Center is highly aligned with CRA guidelines and is an ideal candidate for bank support. An emergency day shelter located in a low-income census tract in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, St. John Center for Homeless Men provides critical social services to nearly 2,000 homeless adult men each month. In addition to addressing immediate needs such as shelter, food and mental health services, St. John also provides long-term support through assistance with permanent affordable housing and employment.

"We thought we were a great fit for banks, and that they would want to invest in our agency's services," says Maria Price, Executive Director at St. John Center. "We have powerful data to show that what we do not only makes a difference for individuals, but also the community. Still...it is intimidating to know that there is a great deal of competition for limited funds. Without a solid track record of financial support from financial institutions, we lacked confidence in our pitch."

findCRA staff members took the time to hear our agency's story – the people we serve, the services we provide, and the difference we make. They brought with them the industry knowledge we lacked, so when they suggested we were not just a fit for CRA funding, but a great fit, our confidence soared.





The Certification process was incredibly helpful. To have the “seal of approval” with the Certification, to have our story packaged for the right audience, and to be made available for CRA match-seekers is of tremendous benefit.



Unsure of how to stand out to banks among a sea of nonprofits providing similar benefits, St. John Center approached findCRA.

After first claiming and updating their free online profile on findCRA's platform, St. John Center then chose to take the next step and become CRA Certified to further distinguish themselves from the sometimes-crowded field of nonprofits seeking bank funding. After St. John Center submitted their initial application, findCRA did a due-diligence assessment of the organization's financial health, board of directors, key staff, programs and services. Once approved, findCRA created a CRA Story document highlighting each of the ways St. John Center aligns with CRA and where they're making an impact. With this essential information distilled into “elevator pitch” material, St. John Center could quickly and easily share their message in a CRA framework that was convenient and impressive to potential bank funders.

As part of their CRA Certification, St. John Center also received a CRA Strategy document outlining recommendations on what types of support banks could best provide for them, how to approach and talk to banks about supporting them, how they help banks meet CRA requirements and a list of ideal banks to reach out to in their service area. Other benefits included an enhanced online profile and more prominent display in search results, as well as other digital and print-ready

marketing tools that make it easy for St. John Center to let everyone know they're CRA Certified. findCRA staff remained available to provide support and answer any additional questions as St. John Center sought bank partners in the community.

Within a matter of months, St. John Center had their biggest victory yet with their new CRA strategy, securing a grant for several thousand dollars from BB&T.

“When BB&T said, ‘Yes, this is something we can support, I jumped with joy,” Maria recalls. “Of course, BB&T sees the benefit of the Employment Services we provide with and for homeless men. Coupled with financial literacy skills, and supported through a housing search process, our clients are finally in a position to put these pieces of their lives back together, and leave homelessness for good. The whole community wins. And at St. John Center, we felt like big winners to have the BB&T support of these endeavors on behalf of the men we serve.”

Empowered by the education and tools they received through findCRA's Certification, Maria plans to continue building upon this new fundraising strategy with local banks to continue growing St. John Center's programming. “We know we offer a great CRA fit, and we will continue to approach potential funders with our story of success, and do so with confidence. Our clients deserve it.”