

> First Community Housing

Housing organization uses technology to improve quality of life for residents

Situation

First Community Housing (FCH) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing affordable housing and services to lower-income individuals in the San Jose, Calif., area. With the median apartment rent in the area averaging \$2,200 per month, FCH plays a crucial role in creating housing for people with incomes below the median. The organization has built a community of 436 households that promotes local involvement, job skills creation, and low crime rates.

Critical issue

FCH is dedicated to enhancing the lives of its residents by offering community programs and services. In order to ensure that its programs provide value to residents, FCH needed to:

- Determine residents' needs through surveys and resident profiles
- Improve residents' quality of life by meeting those needs
- Enhance its programs and facilities to increase resident social interaction and employment

Solution

Based on information revealed by SPSS Inc. data analysis software, FCH was able to improve the quality of life in its developments by increasing resident employment in high-demand industries, reducing gang participation, and increasing social interaction between residents.

Results

- Increased computer industry employment by 24 percent and computer lab use by 42 percent
- Eliminated underused programs, improved existing programs, and developed popular new programs
- Increased social interaction among 63 percent of residents
- Nearly eliminated gang graffiti

At a glance

Country: United States

Industry: Not-for-profit

Date Founded: 1986

Revenues: \$1.5 million

Employees: 6

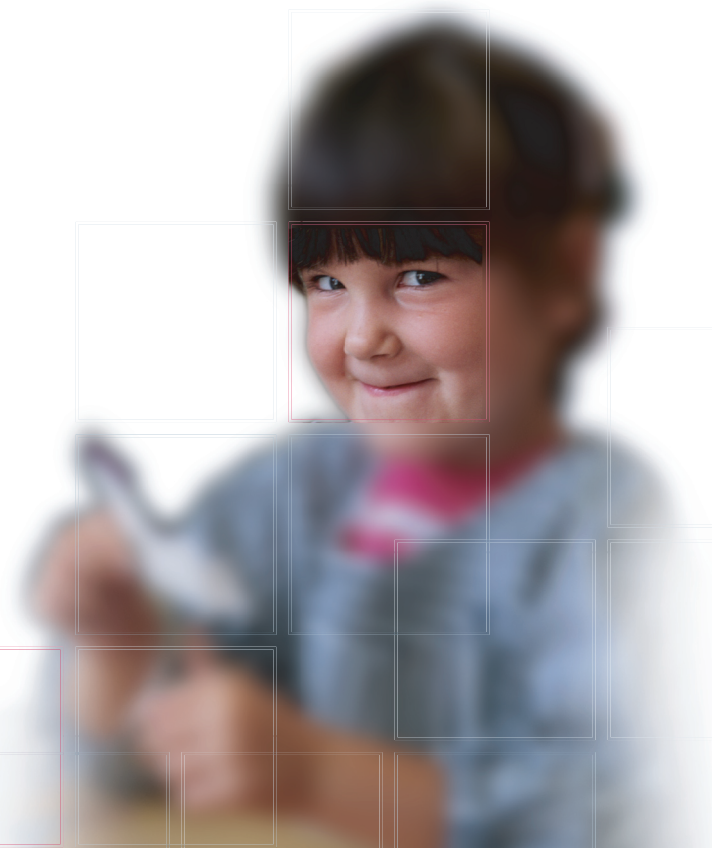
Application

Survey research

Solutions used

PASW® Statistics*

* PASW Statistics, formerly called SPSS Statistics, is part of SPSS Inc.'s Predictive Analytics Software portfolio.



Grew computer industry employment by 24 percent

When FCH surveyed residents to better understand their needs, the residents asked for additional information about, and training for, technical jobs. In response, FCH created a computer training program for residents. The result? According to FCH resident services coordinator Vincente Rivero, the number of residents employed in the computer industry increased 24 percent and use of FCH's existing computer lab increased 42 percent.

Eliminated unused programs, improved existing programs, developed popular new programs

The results from PASW Statistics data analysis enabled FCH to identify no- or low-participation programs, freeing up funds that were then redirected to more popular programs. "Instead of funneling money into buying software that wasn't being used, such as Quicken™, we funneled that money over to children's services and created programs such as boys' and girls' clubs," said Rivero. For instance, PASW Statistics analysis revealed that residents did not use FCH's software purchase program. FCH cancelled the program and used the funds to expand its financial counseling services and increase the number of recreational programs for children—programs that now boast user rates of more than 70 percent.

Analysis also showed surprisingly low participation in programs such as the Book Mobile. FCH began offering the program after 5:00 p.m., to accommodate residents' work schedules, and participation increased nearly 70 percent.

In addition, FCH discovered that resident demographics had changed to include many speaking Asian languages. In the past, FCH posted information in English and Spanish only. As a result of this new information, FCH planned to post information in additional languages.

Increased social interaction among 63 percent of residents

Based on resident profiles created using PASW Statistics software, FCH discovered that a majority of residents were divorced and wanted more social programs.

Yet only 10 percent of residents used existing social resources—such as the clubhouse—and usage had declined steadily for a decade. FCH began to publicize clubhouse events and added new features, such as a piano. In an informal survey conducted after these changes were implemented, 63 percent of residents indicated that they socialized more. In addition, clubhouse use more than doubled.

Nearly eliminated gang graffiti

While it is difficult to accurately measure gang activity, Rivero said that gang paraphernalia and graffiti are now almost nonexistent in the complex—a clear sign that gang participation has dropped dramatically. And changes have improved community life at FCH. Residents demonstrate improved morale in their increased willingness to volunteer for tasks such as computer lab upkeep—and by spending less time gossiping about crime in the complex.

□ "Instead of funneling money into buying software that wasn't being used, . . . we funneled that money over to children's services and created programs such as boys' and girls' clubs."

– Vincente Rivero
Resident Services Coordinator
First Community Housing

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