



NORTHWEST COMPASS, INC.

Where Crisis Becomes Opportunity

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2014

A year of Transition....

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The Mission of Northwest Compass is to enhance our community by providing emergency services, education, and empowerment which foster personal responsibility for those who are vulnerable or in crisis.

Dear Friends

This is a very exciting and innovative chapter in our 34-year history of providing “safety services” in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. For many years, low-income individuals and families have counted on Northwest Compass (formerly CEDA Northwest Self-Help Center) to provide emergency services and education when they need it the most. Since 1981, Northwest Compass has remained one of the focal organizations when individuals and families have nowhere to turn for help. However, in recent years like most non-profits we have faced a sobering reality of declining funding at all levels of government. We too have often felt “entangled in the net” in attempting to meet the growing need for help with less resources.

However, we refuse to accept the ongoing cutbacks in government funding as a catastrophic sign of the times. We now are thinking imaginatively about how we can do things differently to meet the growing demand for help. This has involved ongoing planning and reconstructing our infrastructure so that we can face challenges now and in the future in an efficient and effective manner.

We have taken a number of steps to succeed in this endeavor. In July 2014, we completed certification to become a “Service Enterprise” to address cutbacks in the number of paid staff. A “Service Enterprise” is an organization that fundamentally leverages volunteers and their skills at all levels of the organization to successfully deliver on its mission. For example we have added a total of 50 skill-based volunteers in different areas of program support and in growing organizational capacity. We have worked more closely with local universities and colleges in providing on-the-job placements for student interns who will eventually become our future leaders. We also have moved from a “transactional” organization where people are given resources based on a strict government criteria usually based on income to a “relational-interactional” organization that seeks to empower people to make more effective choices for themselves based on their strengths. Our staff, skill-based volunteers and student interns are now trained in solution-focused counseling and motivational interviewing to help individuals and families take that next step forward.

Change has been our theme this past year while “where crisis becomes opportunity” has been our mission both as an organization facing change and for the 16,000 clients we serve who count on us for support.

We thank all those who support us in our effort and we eagerly anticipate more opportunities to grow and thrive as we look ahead.

Sincerely,



Marcy Traxler
Board Chair

Agency Highlights

- **LISTING OF PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

- Compass Point
- Career Coaching
- Child Care Assistance
- Emergency Assistance
- Energy Assistance
- Enrollment in Health Insurance
- Food Connection
- Housing Assistance & Education
- Money Management Education
- Transitional Living
- Seasonal Programs: Holiday Program, Tax Clinic, School Supplies, and Holiday Baskets!

- **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Volume. Without increasing the number of professional staff members, we served over 12,000 clients (in 9 programs), a growth of 46% more than our originally projected total.
- Client Satisfaction. 60% of the individuals accessing our services report back to us that they feel more confident about overcoming their current and future crises or vulnerabilities.
- Achieved Certification as a Service Enterprise. Northwest Compass has exceeded national standards for leveraging volunteers and their skills across all levels of our organization to successfully deliver on our social mission. For every one hundred dollars of investment in our volunteer program, our volunteers provide a return of almost \$600.
- Expanded programing to meet Community Need. By expanding all of our programs and adding ten community partnerships, Northwest Compass can assist more individuals and families in applying for tax credits, SNAP/LINK, WIC, supportive housing, LIHEAP, weatherization, utility assistance, health insurance enrollment, and counseling for eviction and foreclosure prevention.
- Expanded our social work internship training program to eleven students, and added Northern Illinois University, Dominican University, and University of Chicago to our network of schools for student intern development, which already includes Harper College, Jane Addams School of Social Work, and both Loyola and Northeastern Illinois Universities.

- Education. An increase of 300% in the number of educational activities (workshops and seminars) that are provided to individuals and families in need of information. Our educational activities cover a range of topics that include: foreclosure prevention, life skills, legal issues, access to healthcare, financial recovery, how to deal with stress, and much more.
- Crisis Intervention. We serve more than 6,700 families in our Compass Point program, and still we were able to provide timely, quality assessment of the family's current situation, effective solution-focused case management, and access to internal or external on-going support.
- Emergency Financial Assistance. We assist families with car repairs, clothing for job interviews, and other circumstances through our Helping Hands program, designed to cover needs for which there are no mainstream benefits or funding sources.
- Mobile Food Services. We deliver food to those with high barriers, specifically in the areas of Palatine and the Des Plaines River Road footprints, representing over 10,000 meals. This was made possible through increased donations from many local donors. Our Mobile Food Connection program has not only expanded its geographical boundaries, but has been focusing on schools, apartment complexes, and areas where high barrier populations are known to exist.
- Housing. We provide more than 400 individuals with personal housing counseling information and, when possible, emergency financial support to prevent homelessness and increase diversion efforts. For those participants completing our Transitional Living Program, 100% were able to move into independent, permanent housing.
- Safety. We gave nine individuals housing support and kept them safe from domestic violence through our Transitional Living Program.
- Legal Services. We provided more than 100 individuals access to legal advocacy and assistance from licensed attorneys.

Spirit of Giving & Mission in Action Awards

On Thursday, October 23, Northwest Compass for the first time recognized two outstanding members of the community with the Mission in Action Award and Spirit in Giving Award. We hope to make this an annual event. These two outstanding individuals were chosen because of the model examples they set by showing what it means to follow the core values of Northwest Compass.

Northwest Compass has seven core values: cultural competency, organizational partnerships, mutually agreeable goals, program excellence, accountability, suspending judgment and demonstrating empathy, and solution focused-motivational interviewing. Both award winners went above and beyond to carry out these values.

For the 2014 Spirit in Giving Award, we recognized Ms. Lucille Neacy, of Arlington Heights, IL, for the seemingly endless contributions she has given the organization. As far back as we can go in our accounting records, we found our first donation from Lucille was in March 2005. Since then, Lucille is now approaching 100 donations, having made one every month for the last six years.

Lucille takes the time to write a check and mail it to us every month. She has never asked for any explanation about how her contributions are being used, yet she consciously chooses to support us each month so that those persons that come to Northwest Compass can be in a better place when they leave us.

Northwest Compass receives many gifts from individuals and businesses, and we are thankful for each and every one of them. There are many organizations in our community who also deserve recognition for their financial support. Lucille is one piece of a very large network of support for Northwest Compass and for the communities' population that are vulnerable or in crisis.

Much of our financial support comes through grants that are focused on addressing specific needs of our clients and require that we report to them the outcomes of the use of the dollars funded through the grants. Because of Lucille's confidence that she has in our organization, which she reinforces every time we receive her gift, we want to acknowledge how much her confidence drives us to fulfill her unspoken expectations. It is through persons such as Lucille that Northwest Compass can continue to support the community.

For the 2014 Mission in Action award, we recognized Ms. Pat Kivlahan, of Arlington Heights, IL, for her outstanding support as a volunteer. Pat has been involved with Northwest Compass as a volunteer for 24 years. Following the death of her husband of 35 years, Pat retired from her job to seek other outlets to fill the void. Responding

to an ad for a volunteer, she called upon the Women, Infant and Children's program in our office building, but was subsequently re-directed to Northwest Compass. She has been with us ever since.

Pat works nearly every day behind the scenes so that the rest of the staff can be out front meeting with clients. She has single-handedly entered more than 250,000 client demographic information into our data files. Officially, she is the mother of four children, the grandmother of 12 grandchildren, and the great grandmother of four, soon to be five, great-grandchildren.

Unofficially, Pat has been the mother and friend of an unknown number of staff members, student interns, and volunteers, and like all mothers, has set an example of living the values of Northwest Compass. Because of people like Lucille and Pat, Northwest Compass is a place where crisis becomes opportunity.

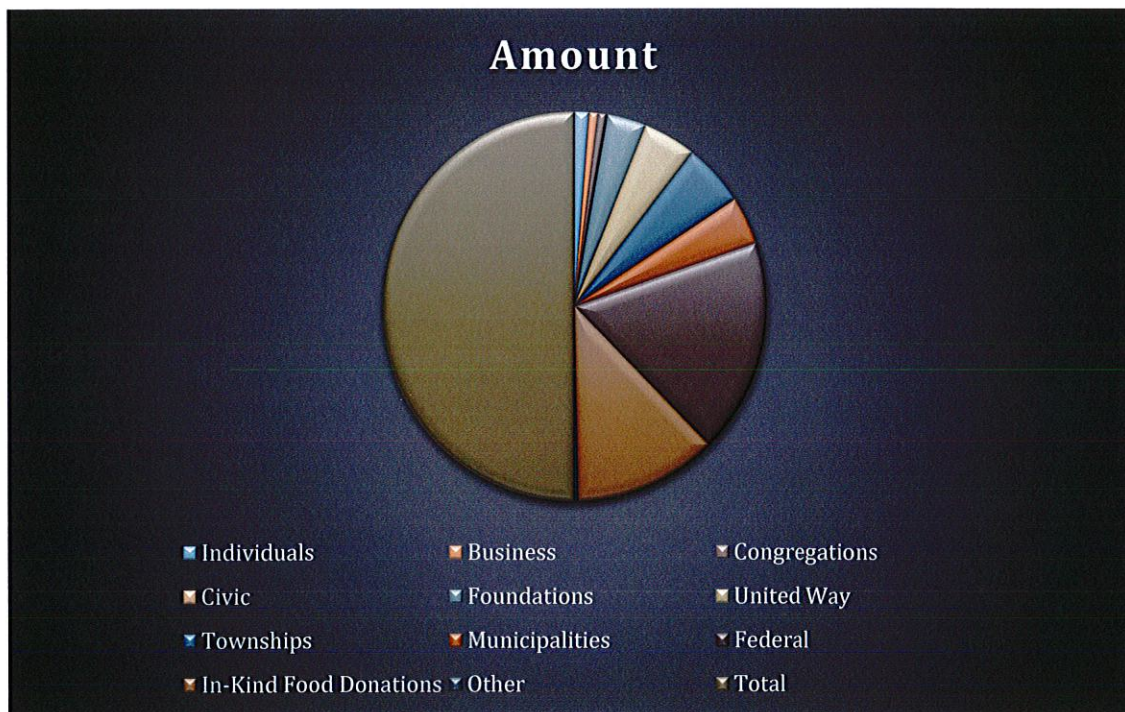
Northwest Compass is grateful for the support we receive from our community. Our donors and volunteers make our work possible in assisting those in crisis.

ADDENDUM: Ms. Pat Kivlahan is an outstanding example of 'mission in action', one that is not likely to ever be matched, which is why Northwest Compass is now renaming this award the "Pat Kivlahan Mission In Action" award.

Financial Snapshot

Contributory Income

DONOR	AMOUNT
Individuals	\$ 27,660
Business	\$ 17,210
Congregations	\$ 15,308
Civic	\$ 3,000
Foundations	\$ 75,314
United Way	\$ 102,621
Townships	\$ 120,131
Municipalities	\$ 91,733
Federal	\$ 410,875
In-Kind Food Donations	\$ 276,308
Other	\$ 6,950
Total	\$ 1,147,110



Our Team

- **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Board Chair:
 - Marcy Traxler, AVP, Business Development, Alexian Brothers Health System
- Members at Large:
 - Vice Chair: William Doucette, PhD., Vice President of Human Resources, NES Rentals Holdings, Inc.
 - Treasurer: Edwin J. Connelly III, Commercial Banking Officer, People's Bank of Arlington Heights
 - Secretary: Wayne T. Lofthouse, Attorney, Wayne T. Lofthouse, P.C.
 - Allen C. McClellan, Retired - IBM Corporation
 - Thomas F. Lysaught, Attorney
 - Dr. Algean Garner, Director of Health & Human Services, Village of Hoffman Estates
 - Jane Conrad, International MCU Supervisor, Zurich North America
 - Mary Wroblewski, Supervisor, Schaumburg Township

- **STAFF**

- Ron Jordan, LCSW, MSW, MPA- Chief Executive Officer
- LeRoy Messenger- Chief Operating Officer
- Barbara Naunheimer, CPA- Accountant
- Sonia Ivanov- Managing Director, Program Delivery
- Jessica Elbe, LCSW, MSW- Managing Director, Partnership & Development
- Maria Gomez- Administrative Assistant
- Jessica Salgado- Program Specialist, Emergency Services & Health Care Enrollment
- Program Specialist, Food Connection & Health Care Outreach
- Beth Forde- Program Specialist, Employment Assistance & Child Care Assistance
- Anna Klimkowicz, LPC- Program Specialist, Housing Assistance & Education & Transitional Living Program

- **SOCIAL WORK INTERNS**

- Nicole Dumele, Loyola University
- Will Milus, Loyola University
- Jaime Vines, Northeastern Illinois University
- Wynn Coughlin, Loyola University
- Linda Lazzara, Northeastern Illinois University
- Amy Sandquist, Loyola University
- Sally Cheeseman, Loyola University

Looking Forward

There has been a recent shift in our society's poverty. According to Moser's 2013 article ("How Poverty Has Moved to Chicago's Suburbs), 10 years ago, 60 percent of the Chicago area's poverty was in the city. Now, it's less than half. He goes on to say that in the suburbs and nearby cities, the population is shrinking and poverty is on the rise.

Many circumstances have led to an increase of those in poverty in the suburbs, including job loss, lack of affordable housing, untreated mental illness, the hollowing out of those leaving the city, and so forth.

Not only does Northwest Compass understand the current trend, we are working toward combating these issues. We know that we will see a change in demographics of those we serve, as well as an increase for demand of our services. By being on the frontline of change and innovation we know that we have the passion and programs necessary to help those in the suburbs remain self-reliant and out of poverty.

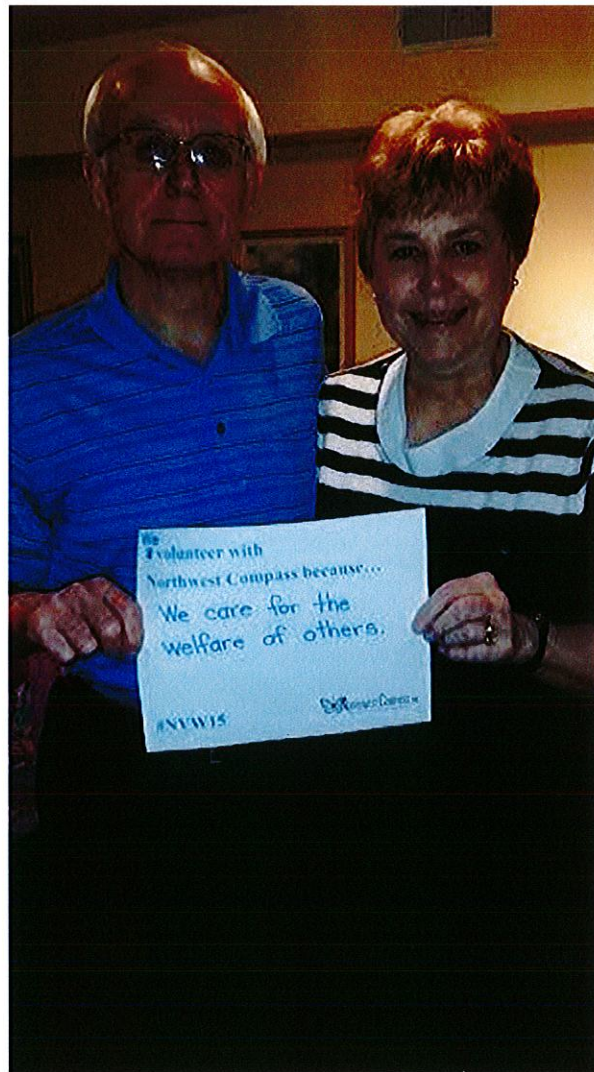
Northwest Compass has been dedicated to strengthening and improving our community for years. We are proud of our history, and we're looking forward to our upcoming years of positive, impactful change. In order to prepare for the years to come we are establishing specific long-term goals.

First and foremost, we are working toward becoming an independent and well-networked leader in delivering comprehensive services when people in our community need it most. We also know that in an environment of continuous change, we must redesign, operate and establish responsive and sustainable programs to meet the changing needs of our diverse target population. We will be able to advance by building and diversifying our overall financial base. By creating a team-based culture that attracts, nurtures, and rewards board members, staff, interns and volunteers, we will be positioned to better serve our community. We want to position Northwest Compass to react to any situation.

Together we can create meaningful change in our community, so all families have the chance to turn crisis into opportunity. Our organization could not provide the programs and services it does without our volunteers and donors who support our mission.

There are a variety of ways that you can make a difference and get involved with Northwest Compass. To learn more about ways to support our organization, please contact us.

As an organization we will continue to provide families in the northwest suburbs of Chicago with impactful programs and services. We are looking forward to the future with your generous support!



Contact Information



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