

# Case Study: Data You Can Use

## 1. Introduction

Data You Can Use (DYCU) is a Milwaukee nonprofit with a mission to advance community access to data and the skills needed to drive informed and equitable decision-making in Milwaukee and beyond. A well-respected community-based organization abiding by the motto “No data without stories, and no stories without data,” DYCU stands alone in providing hyper-local data that drives community change for dozens of nonprofits and philanthropic foundations working to improve the quality of life in Milwaukee neighborhoods. However, like many nonprofits, DYCU lacked the staff and capacity to develop and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy.

## 2. Problem

The primary issue DYCU faced was that most of their funding was tied to consulting projects requiring specific deliverables to outside organizations. DYCU had a handful of program-specific grants on which they could rely each year but needed general operating support to fully cover expenses like rent, salaries, and professional development. Additionally, DYCU hosts a highly successful annual event, “Data Day,” but did not have the capacity to solicit event sponsorships to offset costs and generate additional flexible revenue. DYCU also needed a strategy to increase individual donations, a small portion of their revenue portfolio.

These funding challenges were significant, resulting in heavy staff workloads and an inability to accept new projects due to a lack of capacity.

## 3. Action Steps

To address these issues, DYCU engaged with Momentum Nonprofit Strategies, which took the following steps over the course of a multi-year partnership:

- Conducted comprehensive grant funder research and developed a grants calendar with aligned opportunities.
- Developed grant boilerplate language clearly describing DYCU’s impact to simplify grant writing.

- Supported the ED in conducting targeted outreach to introduce the organization to new funders
- Wrote and submitted grants, and eventually, reports for grants awarded
- Developed sponsorship materials and a prospect list for Data Day as well as outreach support
- Crafted a 12-month development calendar and implementation support to clarify specific actions the organization would take to raise brand awareness, increase the board's role in fundraising, and increase funding from new sources
- Crafted compelling EOY solicitation campaigns to increase support from individual donors
- Developed their first-ever annual report describing their significant accomplishments
- Nominated DYCU and the ED for several awards to increase credibility and brand awareness
- Engaged in one-on-one coaching sessions for the Development Manager to support professional development and with the ED to work through higher-level fundraising and outreach strategies

## 4. Results

As a result, DYCU saw significant growth over our multi-year partnership.

	<b>Grants</b>	<b>Event Sponsorships</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
<b>Year 1 (baseline)</b>	\$108,000	\$0	\$900
<b>Year 2 (Momentum's first full year)</b>	\$276,056	\$32,000	\$3,621
<b>Year 3</b>	\$336,051	\$45,474	\$7,492
<b>Year 4</b>	\$510,501	\$58,926	\$24,502
<b>Percentage increase</b>	373%	New	2,622%

Significantly, new grants secured included several unrestricted, multi-year commitments which provided flexibility and breathing room to explore how to maximize their impact. With these improvements, DYCU reduced their reliance on consulting contracts, brought staff salaries up to market rate, increased the size of their overall budget, and hired several

additional FT staff members. This includes a brand-new Development Manager who is taking the foundation laid by Momentum and bringing some development tasks back in-house, with the goal of eventually reducing their reliance on Momentum. President & Executive Director Dr. Victor Amaya also received recognition from *Milwaukee BizTimes* as a Notable Latino Executive, and as the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Greater Together Awards Doug Jansson Leadership awardee. Moreover, DYCU had the financial stability to undertake several groundbreaking data projects like the [Milwaukee Wealth Index](#) which cemented their role as Milwaukee's trusted data intermediary.

*"In my journey as a President and Executive Director of Data You Can Use, the road to successful fundraising and capacity building has been markedly enhanced by our collaboration with Momentum Nonprofit Strategies. Their expertise in not only crafting but also in securing grants and sponsorships has been pivotal. The name 'Momentum' truly encapsulates the experience; once their strategies were set into motion, we witnessed a transformative surge in approvals and support. The invaluable guidance from Amanda has not only enriched our annual event but has also expanded my personal horizon in the fundraising realm. Their dedication to our cause and unparalleled expertise underscores why I would wholeheartedly recommend Momentum to any non-profit seeking to elevate their fundraising endeavors."*

- Dr. Victor Amaya, Executive Director  
Data You Can Use