How Fresh Start **uses data** from Gray Decision Intelligence to **help women achieve self-sufficiency**

Situation

"

We want to ensure that program participants get connected with a solid employer in a growing industry."

Solution

The data that Gray DI had on high-demand job skills allowed Fresh Start to fast- track program participants into the right job opportunities.

Apillar in the Phoenix community for over thirty years, Fresh Start is a nonprofit organization that supports women in achieving self-sufficiency, focusing on five crucial areas: family stability; health and well-being; financial management; education and training; and career.

"For individuals to become self-sufficient, they need to secure employment at a self-sufficient wage in order to meet their basic needs, such as shelter, food, health care, and transportation—and this is especially true for the population we serve," said Abdu Dahr, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships. "That's why our main goal is to help jump-start the careers of our clients by putting them on a path to employment that allows them to earn a livable wage and break cycles of poverty."

Abdu added, "The challenge we face is learning about which industries and occupations are in-demand and growing. We don't want to post job openings and send program participants to find random, dead-end jobs. We want to ensure that they get connected with a solid employer in a growing industry, providing them not only with what they need for the present, but helping them build a successful future, too."

Gray DI introduced Abdu to its Program Evaluation System (PES) for higher education. PES includes more than forty market metrics, combining public and proprietary data sources, sophisticated crosswalks, and robust business intelligence software to track student interest, workforce programs and certificates offered, and employer demand by occupation, job title, and company. The data that Gray DI had on high-demand job skills in Fresh Start's market was vital for Abdu: It allowed him to fast-track program participants into the right job opportunities. (CONTINUED)

"
We are grateful for the donation from Gray Decision Intelligence. The PES platform has opened doors for our program participants to **in-demand, high-growth career opportunities** with companies like Boeing and Microsoft. **It's helped Fresh Start increase successful outcomes for our clients** on their journey to self-sufficiency."

Abdu Dahr
Vice President of Strategic Partnerships
Fresh Start

Solution
CONTINUED

Gray Decision Intelligence customized PES so Fresh Start could access the data and information it needed.

"We use PES differently than colleges and universities," said Abdu. "Instead of tracking market demand for academic programs and predicting enrollment, we work to identify short-term certificate opportunities that only require a high school diploma. We also want to see which occupations and industries are growing in our area."

Because Fresh Start's use of PES was unique, the Gray DI team customized the system so Abdu could access the data and information he needed. Essentially, Abdu's process begins by reviewing hiring companies and their job postings to understand the skills required in his market. He then searches for higher education institutions that teach the skills and develops partnerships with employers to fast-track newly certified program participants into open jobs.

"For example, by using PES, I discovered a high demand for welders," said Abdu. "Even though it is a nontraditional career for women, I knew we could create the perfect program. As it turns out, schools and employers report that women are often successful in the welding industry because they pay close attention to detail."

The Fresh Start education team enrolled six women into the new welding program created in partnership with StrataTech, a local welding school. To support the program, StrataTech provides scholarships to Fresh Start clients for career training in the areas of HVAC and refrigeration, electrical applications, and welding at The Refrigeration School, Inc. (RSI) in Phoenix.

RESULTS

Gray Decision Intelligence helped Fresh Start achieve these results between August 2021 and June 2022.

182
182 female program participants

40
employer and education partners

90%
graduation rate

75%
job placement rate