



The **Improve** Group, PBC

Public Benefit Report

Year ending Dec. 31, 2016

The Improve Group became a Public Benefit Corporation on December 31, 2016. This is our annual benefit report for 2016, describing the ways we pursued a public benefit, the public benefit created, and the context in which we were operating.

This report was reviewed and approved by our Board of Directors on March 31, 2017.

For more information about our work, or ideas about how we can partner with you to help you achieve a positive social impact, contact us at info@theimprovegroup.com.

Mission Statement

We help mission-driven organizations make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure their investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact.

Vision Statement

The Improve Group’s vision is that mission-driven organizations will effectively develop a more resilient, equitable and thriving world.

We Value

Thoughtfulness	Excellence	Collaboration and inclusiveness
Innovation and creativity	Joy	Building a better world

2016 Goals

Goal

Public benefit

Use our practice to support positive social change.

The evaluation field, mission-driven organizations, and communities are supported with the information and strategies they need to make positive social change.

Develop products and tools that meet community needs and are marketable.

Services and products are created and available that help organizations make positive social change.

Lead with a joyful, engaged, powerful team.

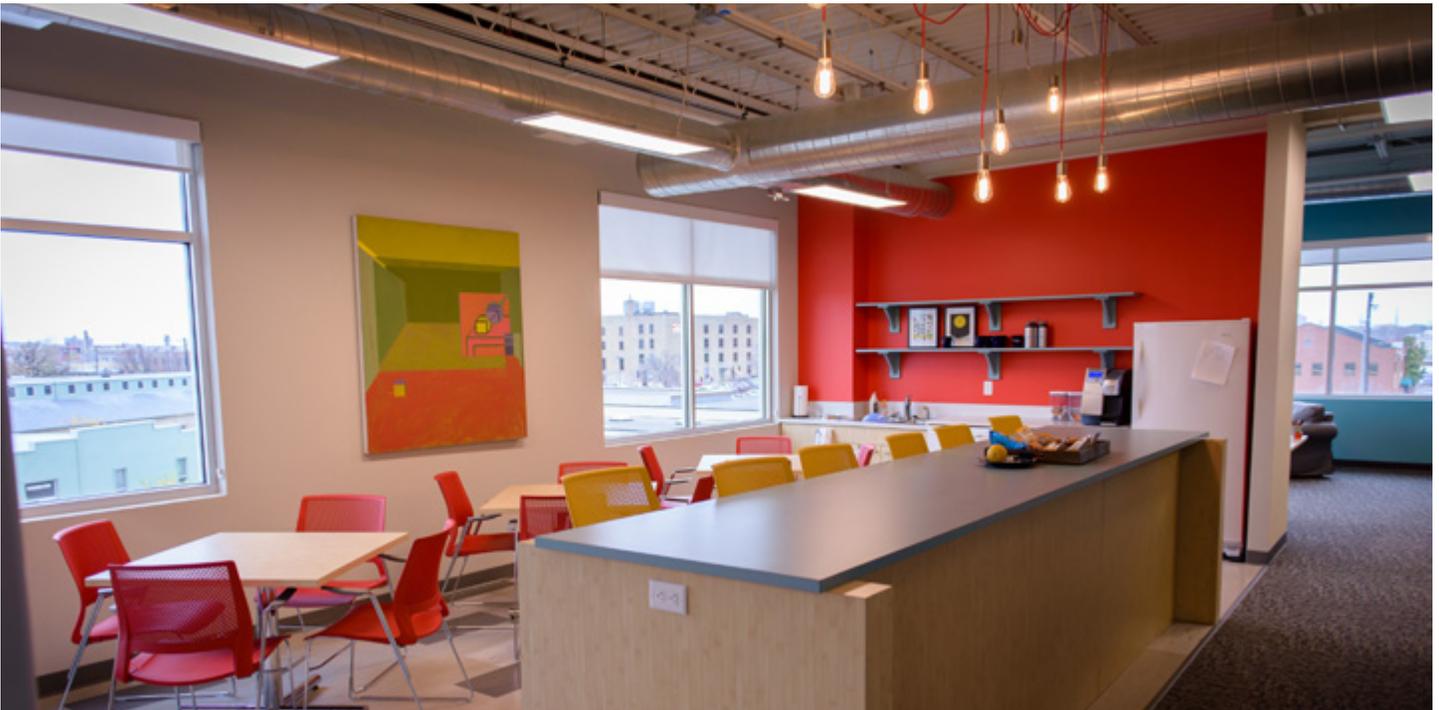
The Improve Group creates and sustains rewarding jobs that allow our employees to support themselves and their families.



How did we pursue public benefits?

The Improve Group pursued its public benefit in several ways. We:

- Designed and opened a brand-new office that allows for deeper collaboration across communities and brings joy to our team. It has a flexible creative zone, interactive technology, is accessible regardless of mobility, and is within two blocks of public transit. We equipped our space with a variety of features that help our team work well with our community, including quiet spaces, interview rooms and sit/stand desks.
- Modernized our infrastructure and technology to allow us to work more collaboratively, such as an integrated project management and contact management system, an interactive web meeting software, and enhanced survey software that allows us to work more closely with community members to gather data.
- Worked on meaningful projects that advanced social change, including some pro bono projects.
- Began planning our [new practice areas](#), which we subsequently launched in 2017.
- Engaged our staff in multiple initiatives, including building a Habitat for Humanity house, developing our strategic plan, and sharing their vision for our company.



What public benefits did we create?

As a result of our work, several public benefits were created.

- More than eighty organizations found new strategies to make a positive social change in their communities. These organizations are from different sectors, are of different sizes, and are located all over the world. By working with us:
 - [Best Buy](#) developed new strategies to inspire youth to pursue technology careers, particularly those from communities currently under-represented in the field.
 - The [State of Minnesota](#) partnered more effectively with local communities to reduce and prevent commercial tobacco use, especially those communities facing persistent disparities in commercial tobacco use.
 - [NACOLE](#) identified new ways to promote institutionalization of civilian oversight of law enforcement and include a more diverse population in its work.
 - Mercy Corps uncovered the impact of initiatives in [Niger](#) and [Mali](#) to promote community resiliency and reduce food insecurity, and documented lessons learned for future initiatives.
 - The [Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation](#) documented how its 5-year PSEI initiative helped connect employment agencies, young people entering the nonprofit sector, and job seekers in industry-specific employment training programs.





- Our new [Creative Zone](#) is serving as a gathering space for community members to learn, create, and advance positive social change. Open to the community for rent or share, visitors can write on the walls, share videos, and enjoy a cup of hot coffee or tea as they find new strategies to make a public benefit.
- Through two events, people came together to build relationships and advance positive social change.
 - We partnered with the [Creative Enterprise Zone](#) to [welcome members of our community to our new space](#). Through a hyper-local strategy for sourcing vendors, we kept all funds within the Creative Enterprise Zone; food, drink, and activities were all provided by businesses within half of a mile of our space.
 - Our community conversation on [social impact](#) brought together businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies to talk about shared strategies to make a positive social change.
- Through training, coaching, and other support, we helped organizations learn to do evaluation and strategic planning for greater positive social change. For example, we worked with the Hope Coalition, an agency helping families in crisis to rebuild their lives, to develop an evaluation strategy. As we wrapped up our work together, staff told us “I want to thank you again for the amazing job you’ve been doing. We’ve all learned so much, and it really has made such a difference to the agency’s infrastructure and professionalism. The Improve Group is very impressive indeed, and we are so excited to have had this opportunity.” – Jo Seton, Hope Coalition



- We extended our public benefit by giving back to community-based organizations.
 - Our entire staff contributed to a [Habitat for Humanity](#) build, sponsored by Sunrise Banks, PBC. Over two days, staff volunteered a total of 320 hours to building the home near the Capitol in St. Paul (a \$35,000 in-kind value). We also made a \$2,500 cash contribution to purchase materials used in building the home.
 - We supported the work of organizations focused on issues of equity and diversity by sponsoring their annual events. And at the [MEDA](#) gala, we successfully bid on a suite at a University of Minnesota Gopher's hockey game – with the money going to MEDA's programs, and the fun going to our joyful team!
 - Employee donations were matched to double their support to the causes that are important to them. Through this long-standing program, we donated \$1,485 in 2016.
- Finally, we built lasting relationships with other organizations working towards a public benefit, including:
 - Partnering with the [yPAR network](#), coordinated by Youthprise, which engages young people in conducting, learning from, and using research. Through our partnership, youth had more opportunities to practice their research skills, and our projects were enhanced with youth perspectives.
 - Continuing our partnership with [Partnership Resources](#), which supports people with disabilities at work and in the community. We found our Office Assistant through their work, and continually find ways to learn from each other about effectively working with people with disabilities.
 - Selecting vendors that have a social mission or benefit. For example, we purchase our office supplies through [Innovative Office Solutions](#), a woman-owned business that emphasizes giving back, and our cleaning service, [BRC](#), emphasizes workforce development, sustainability, and adopting green clean certified practices.

What barriers did we have to achieving a public benefit?

While we achieved many of the benefits we pursued, we did have a few barriers to achieving more.

- Time and money are both finite resources. Our attention and investments were focused on the benefits above in 2016 to help us use these resources wisely.
- We developed our strategic plan at the beginning of 2016. During the first half of 2016, we spent a lot of our time fine-tuning our plans and deciding how to best nurture them into action.
- The opening of our community space was delayed by six months. Because of that, we were unable to do as many events and convenings as we'd hoped.



The **Improve** Group, PBC



[Facebook.com/TheImproveGroup](https://www.facebook.com/TheImproveGroup)



[@TheImproveGroup](https://twitter.com/TheImproveGroup)



[Linkedin.com/company/the-improve-group](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-improve-group)



[Pinterest.com/ImproveGroup](https://www.pinterest.com/ImproveGroup)



651.315.8919



info@theimprovementgroup.com

661 LaSalle Street, Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55114