



Better Together:

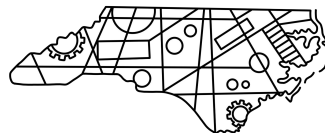
How Nonprofit Collaboration and a Public Benefits
Tool Strengthened Community Connections and Civic
Engagement





MOON

MUJERXS ORGANIZANDO
OPORTUNIDADES NOTABLES



Blueprint NC



CODE
THE DREAM



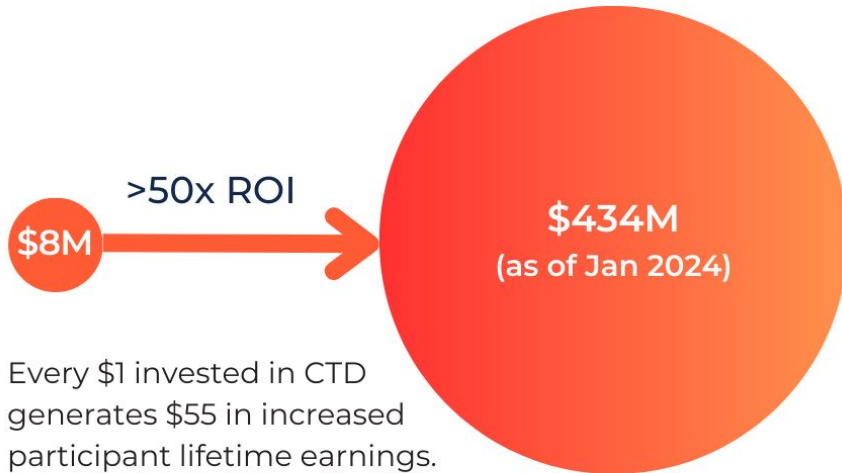
- creates opportunity that changes lives; and
- builds technology that benefits our communities.



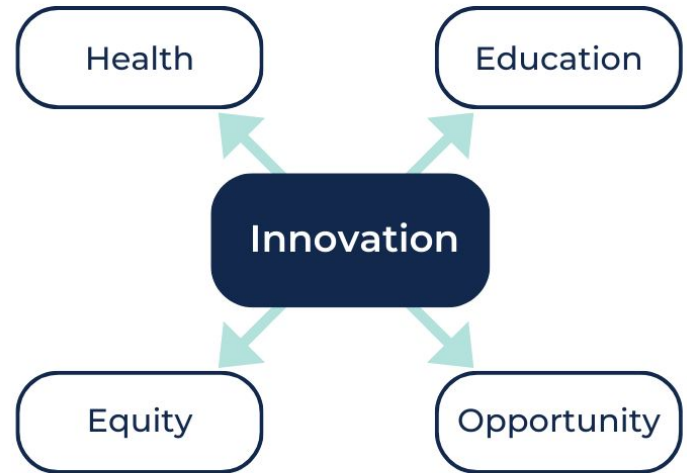
Code the Dream is a NC nonprofit that envisions a world in which tech innovation comes from all of us and benefits all of us.

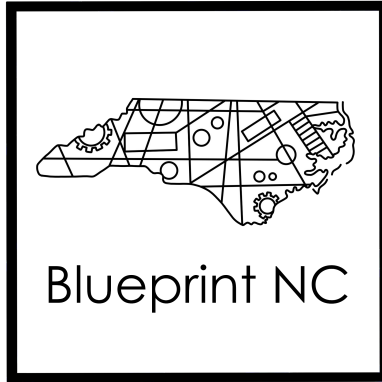
Dual Impact Model

Inclusive Opportunity



Inclusive Innovation





With our partners, [Blueprint NC](#) works towards inclusive and anti-racist democracy rooted in civic engagement through movement building and mobilization.



MOON

MUJERXS ORGANIZANDO
OPORTUNIDADES NOTABLES



**Somos mujerxs, luchando por la equidad de
nuestras comunidades.**

Session Objectives:

- **See** how open-source, nonprofit-built tools can expand access to critical services, especially for underserved populations.
- **Learn** how issue organizing, policy advocacy, and service delivery can be mutually reinforcing.
- **Explore** a replicable model of how tech and civic engagement nonprofits can partner to achieve more together than alone.

AGENDA

- Introduction
- MyFriendBen-NC public benefits screener tool
- MyFriendBen-NC Pilot
 - **Overview**
 - **The experience**
- Blueprint NC current program
- Group activity
- Q+A

Problem: Too Many Families Are Struggling Financially

92 million Americans live in or near poverty*

Including nearly

1 in 3

North Carolinians

* income below 200% of
Federal Poverty level

Increasing enrollment in the safety net would dramatically reduce poverty nationally

If the top seven programs were fully funded and everyone eligible were enrolled, poverty in the US would fall:

31%
overall

44%
for
children



Structural barriers prevent eligible people from accessing support

Recent federal changes will make it worse

Barriers:

- *Program rules are confusing*
- *Researching and applying is time intensive*
- *Programs and applications are fragmented*

Even seasoned navigators find it challenging to learn about all the programs and keep up with changes



Solution:



myfriendben

NORTH CAROLINA

One-Stop Universal Benefits Screener

Responsive to families, who wanted a tool that was anonymous, fast and flexible

- No account or **personally identifiable information** required
- Optional ability to **exclude programs** that a household is already receiving
- **Fully translated** into 12 languages
- **Readability** at middle school level

Does your household currently have any benefits?

This information will help make sure we don't give you results for benefits you already have.

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Please tell us what benefits your household currently has.

Cash Assistance ▼

Food and Nutrition ▼

Child Care, Youth, and Education ▼

Housing and Utilities ▼

Transportation ▼

Health Care ▼

Demo



MFB-NC Connects Families to Critical Programs

Screens for 19 Benefits and Tax Credits

- Medicaid
- Emergency Medicaid
- ACA Subsidies
- SNAP
- WIC
- SunBucks
- NC Subsidized Child Care Assistance
- Social Security - SSI & SSDI
- NC Work First (Cash Assistance)
- Child Tax Credit / Credit for Other Dependents
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- NC LIEAP (Utility Assistance - UA)
- Lifeline Telephone Assistance
- NC Weatherization Program
- NC Crisis Intervention Program (UA)
- Medicare Savings

MyFriendBen-NC Pilot and Launch

What users have liked...

- Simple, fast and easy to use!
- Screener available in different languages
- Helpful to have all benefit information in one place

“It has been an empowerment tool for people to know what they are eligible for before they complete an application.”

“I love it. As a community health worker it gives me confidence - I can send someone to DSS knowing that this person is qualified for the benefit.”

MyFriendBen-NC Pilot and Launch

“To my surprise, I qualified for Medicaid at the age of 60, and now I finally have health coverage. Having this coverage has been a true blessing.”

— Maria, NC user

PILOT PROGRAM

What worked?

- Strong ties to the community built on trust and long-time relationships
- Existing membership base
- App offered all available benefits and resources in one place
- Informed families of resources beyond the popular ones
- Supports CBOs to engage their membership base/community
- Given the current political and socio-economic climate, MFB-NC offered a new way to identify assistance without leaving their home
- Easy to navigate and digitally accessible

PILOT PROGRAM

Complexities:

- Staying consistent to follow-up with families about benefit eligibility
- Ensuring CBOs have culturally competent staff and aware of resources and resources eligibility
- Language accessibility for multilingual communities who qualify but aren't aware of services available
- Wording of applications makes the resources inaccessible due to their complexity



Building Community Power through Issue Organizing



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- **Base building:** Build relationships with community members and recruit them into organizations through one-on-ones and addressing issues that directly impact them
- **Data:** Track ALL conversations and engagement with community members by using open canvassing data tools and syncing voters into your VAN committee
- **Civic participation:** Engage with community members by including them in your ongoing and existing civic engagement program.
- **Accountability:** Inform community members about the current state of public benefits, how elections play a role, and share spaces where they can hold elected officials accountable for the current changes taking place.
- **Long-term community engagement:** Ensure at least 40 individuals complete the public benefits assessment tool *MyFriendBen-NC* by following up with their application results and continuing to engage with them in your organization's programs and activities beyond project completion.

Base-Building

Engaging and activating a large base of permanent volunteers to strengthen movement infrastructure. Civic engagement statistics demonstrate that going beyond the first initial contact to continuous engagement is the foundation for effective base-building and community participation.

Partners data informed Blueprint that a minimum of 3 conversations with individuals helped move them from a contact to an engagement.

- Initial conversation
- Second conversation
- Third conversation
- Long term engagement and member sustainability

Messaging

“Hi, I’m [name] with [organization name]!

We are a community organization focusing on [1-3 major areas of work]. Today, we are helping community members identify the public benefits their family may qualify for. We have a short survey you can fill out that will help you identify the public benefits and other service programs you are qualified to receive.

MyFriendBen-NC is an online screening tool that helps people understand what public benefits they might be eligible for based on basic info about their household. The information shared is anonymous and is not shared with any outside organizations or government agencies.

Would you like to fill it out and we can help you with the next steps to obtain your benefits?”



Messaging

“Hi, I’m [name] with [organization name]!

We are a community organization focusing on [1-3 major areas of work].

We know it's tough to make ends meet right now. Costs are rising on things like food and health care, and now our representatives are threatening to get rid of crucial support programs like SNAP and Medicaid.

We've worked too hard to have these benefits taken away-- so we're out here today helping folks take advantage of them before it's too late.

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Valores

ABOUT US

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION GOES
HERE.
IT COULD BE YOUR MISSION OR PURPOSE STATEMENT.

Costs are rising on things like food and health care, unfortunately, crucial support programs like SNAP and Medicaid are being threatened. MyFriendBen-NC is available for folkstake advantageof these benefitsbefore it's too late.

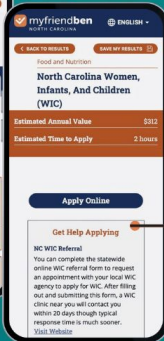
GETTING HELP SHOULDN'T BE HARD. NOW YOU HAVE A FRIEND TO GUIDE YOU.

Meet MyFriendBen

14+ benefits
and tax credits



12 languages



Information to
help you make
a plan before
you apply

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

MESSAGE: _____

CONTACT US



Valores

QUIENES SOMOS

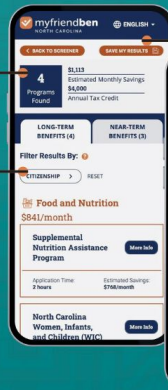
INFORMACION ACERCA DE TU ORGANIZACION.
PUEDEN INCLUIR SU MISION O DECLARACIÓN DE
QUIENES SON O QUE HACEN

Costs are rising on things like food and health care, unfortunately, crucial support programs like SNAP and Medicaid are being threatened. MyFriendBen-NC is available for folkstake advantageof these benefitsbefore it's too late.

RECIBIR AYUDA NO DEBERIA SER DIFICIL. AHORA TIENES A UN AMIGO PARA GUIARTE. .

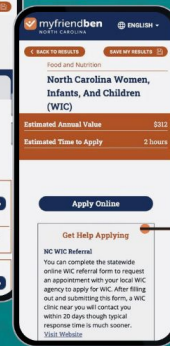
Conoce a MyFriendBen

Mas de 14
beneficios y
creditos
tributarios



Anonimament
e estima tu
eligibilidad y el
valor
monetario.

12 lenguajes



Información
para ayudarte
a hacer un
plan antes de
aplicar.

NOMBRE: _____

FECHA: _____

MENSAJE: _____

CONTACTANOS



Data

Using data tools to record these interactions has proven to be another effective tactic to support base-building efforts.

The data tools will help track and report field contacts, event attendance, and follow-ups.





Accountability Tactics

Civics 101 workshops/education	Advocacy/legislative day
Host/attend accountability town halls	Sharing voting education material and information
Registering voters	Candidate forums
Letter writing	Vigils
Attending city council meetings, county commissioner meetings, county board of election meetings, and school board meetings	In-district meetings with state and federal elected officials
Coordinated campaigns	Earned media

Current Partners

1. AMEXCAN
2. Community Civil Activist
3. Mi Familia Vota
4. North Carolina A. Philip Randolph Institute
5. North Carolina Black Alliance
6. Shackle Free Community Outreach Inc.
7. Valores en Alamance









Q & A



ROLE PLAYING

You are a community organizer and you are helping to organize and attend a food giveaway event for Thanksgiving. You are talking to people about the work of your organization and explain you are using MyFriendBen-NC to help families find out about benefit programs and tax credits they might be eligible for.

You complete the screener and offer to follow-up. If they are willing to share their contact information, you can enter it into the Empower app along with the screener results link, so you can follow-up with the community member at a future point to help them apply and further engage them in the work and events of your organization.



Debrief



Contact

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Evaluation

