This report represents ONE SMALL STEP’s responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

ONE SMALL STEP
1100 N. Alma School Rd., Suite 9, Chandler, AZ 85224
480-285-4111
www.clothescabin.org

Mission:
Our vision is that no person within our service area lacks the clothing needed to be employed, to maintain a healthy and hygienic life, and to be socially accepted. To that end, One Small Step provides free clothing and household linens to people in need, and builds lasting relationships with clients, characterized by love, trust, and respect.

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1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

The Board adopted a strategic plan in March 2012 to focus on operations that are within the scope of the mission. The primary goals are: 1. To provide clothing and household linens to people in need 2. To provide services that reduce the need for additional clothing 3. To maintain a beneficial and permanent presence in the community 4. To provide opportunities for individuals to serve their neighbors 5. To build lasting relationships with clients, characterized by Christian love, trust, and respect.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

The strategies we are employing to address these challenges include: 1. Recruiting volunteers with the temperament and ability for client service 2. Partnering with more faith-based and community organizations to provide clothing in the shortage areas 3. Automating the data collection and registration process to provide more accurate service statistics 4. Opening Clothes Cabin for client service in the evening and one additional day 5. Hiring a professional administrator to improve organizational stability and permanence 6. Broadening the body of donors to include more foundations, corporations, churches, and community groups. 7. Increasing our fund-raising efforts through an annual signature event and quarterly projects or events.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

One Small Step, through Clothes Cabin, provides three services that are not offered by any other agency in the area. (1) It supplies clothing, shoes, and household linens two days a week to low- and no-income individuals and families. (2) The Back to Work program provides steel-toed work boots to men who need them to secure employment in construction, landscaping, or warehousing. (3) Clothes Cabin offers free laundry service to its homeless clients. Clothes Cabin is open to the clients two days a week, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and one evening a week from 6:00 to 8:00. It is also open for donations four days a week from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The quality of the clothing is of utmost importance. Every garment is scrutinized during the initial sorting and again as it is hung. No clothing that is dirty, stained, damaged, badly worn, or smoke tainted is offered to the clients. Work boots and about 90% of the socks and underwear are purchased new. The showroom is cleaned daily and ambient music creates a pleasant shopping environment. To guarantee their safety and that of our clients, preschool children are required to stay in a playroom (Kid Cabin) while their parents shop. Clothes Cabin has removed as many barriers to service as possible, desiring to help all people in need. While other local clothing banks limit services to their city's residents and may require documents like birth certificates, proof of residence, and state issued identification, Clothes Cabin believes those requirements are barriers for many poor people. Our limits on the number of visits and items, and the photo ID, minimize opportunities for fraud without throwing up barriers. Approximately 50 regular volunteers carry out the day-to-day operations of Clothes Cabin. New volunteers are provided a training manual and personal orientation to the agency's processes and policies. Volunteers sort, wash, iron, hang, and display the clothing; clean and display shoes; operate the front desk, registering and instructing clients; check out clients and bag their selections; maintain a clean appearance in the shop; inventory and restock the racks; and perform other duties as necessary. Thirty-five volunteers have given more than 100 hours of service in 2013. Students, families and church groups frequently help at Clothes Cabin and find it a satisfying experience. Altogether, more than 200 individuals provide some service throughout the year.

4. How will we know if we're making progress?

In 2012, 1,600 families came to Clothes Cabin for help and received more that 70,000 articles of clothing and linens. The number of families will rise to approximately 2,000 in 2013. Their stories indicate that a lack of appropriate clothing prevents
them from experiencing the most important aspects of a normal life. Children are embarrassed to go to school, men and women cannot hold decent jobs, and the homeless suffer from poor hygiene and exposure. The clothing we provide opens up opportunities for education, employment, health, hygiene, self-esteem, and social acceptance. From their reports, we have seen that the free clothing Clothes Cabin provides • relieves the family of financial stress • allows them to pay for other critical needs • provides dignity and social acceptance • promotes health and personal hygiene • improves opportunity for employment • allows children to participate in school and extracurricular activities • eliminates children’s feelings of insecurity and embarrassment at school and • reduces the temptation to shoplift. The long-term benefits to the community include higher employment, lower truancy, better health, and increased participation in normal societal functions. As one client said, “You have given us all a gift, far greater than the tangible garments you put on our backs. You have helped heal and restore that sense of self worth and ambition which becomes eroded by poverty.” Work boots provided to unemployed men and women have allowed 55 individuals to return to work in service areas such as warehousing, landscaping, and construction. This alone has allowed them to provide for their families to some degree.

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

In 2013, One Small Step made progress by automating the client information and registration process. It added the evening hours for client service and increased the number of families served by nearly 30%. An Executive Director was hired in June to provide stability and permanence in administration. The number of volunteers recruited and trained allowed Clothes Cabin to keep pace with the increasing client numbers. Several new community groups and churches became supporters in 2013, holding clothing drives and fund-raisers.