

The
Results and Performance
Accountability
Implementation Guide

Questions and Answers
about How to Do the Work

www.raguide.org

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THE RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT HOW TO DO THE WORK
or**

**▲How to improve the well-being of children, adults, families and communities;
improve the performance of programs and agencies;
and strengthen state and local budgeting systems, all before breakfast.●**

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The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

0.1

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide is intended for those brave souls who are working to actually implement some form of [results or performance accountability](#) in their community, city, school district, county, state or nation. Implementation is no small matter. The leap from theory to practice requires courage, time, discipline and some knowledge about HOW to do the work. This guide is devoted to this last ingredient, how to do the work. It is an attempt to summarize as much of what we know about implementation as possible.

Tips

1. Next, check out "[How to Use the Guide](#)"
2. Click on the underlined words to see more information. Use the **Back Key** to return to this page.

The guide is organized by question. And we have tried to find the hardest questions, the ones you might ask, and then give the best answer we could. Trying to answer tough questions is tough and trying. There is still much we don't know about this work, and, in truth, there always will be. This work is, by its nature, a process of experimentation and discovery. For that reason we also see this guide as a work in progress, where we will add new knowledge as we gather it. You are part of that gathering process. As you read this you will find that you have ideas and experience to offer. And [we would like to hear from you](#) about this. (Use the back key to return to this page.) You may also think of tough questions you would like answered, and we would like to hear these as well. Or you may not be satisfied with the answer offered here. Write to us, tell us what you think is wrong, and we'll try again.

The answers to the questions in this paper have two purposes: First to inform those doing the work. And second to help those doing the work explain and, where appropriate, "sell" the approach to others. Those others might be elected officials, decision makers, or new partners.

We try not to skimp on answers. The text is edited to make it readable, to present the main ideas quickly. But we have also loaded into this guide everything we can think of that may be useful, including detailed (and sometimes technical) answers, pictures, formats and other tools you can use. The guide incorporates significant material from prior publications but also includes much material that has not been published anywhere before.

Finally, it is important to note that the guide has a point of view. It is not a neutral summary of work in the field of results and performance accountability. Rather it is designed to help implement an approach to this work previously developed by the guide's principle author (with the assistance of many generous friends and colleagues) and presented in publications of The Finance Project, The Center for the Study of Social Policy, The Foundation Consortium, the UCLA

Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities and the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute.
(See [Author and Sponsor credits](#), [Acknowledgements](#), and the publications listed in [Resources and References](#)).

We hope you find this guide useful. Please let us know.

P.S. If you are looking for easy answers go to easyanswers.com.

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

0.2

How do I use this guide?

Because this is a web-based guide, there are many different ways to use it. You can read it as a normal paper from beginning to end. Or you can jump around to find things that interest you. There are many tools to help you find what you want. See the choices on the [home page](#). The paper can be accessed in any of the following ways (click on any to go there):

Index of Questions: The guide is built around a series of questions and answers. All the questions in the paper are listed in one place. You can read through them, click on the one you want to read, and go to a special page with a short answer, a full answer, and a listing of tools, tips and case studies.

One question after the other: Start at any question and click "next," or "back" and you can read the answers to the questions in order for as many questions as you want.

Index of Topics: Topics are presented in two ways: by major section of the paper (e.g. Results Accountability, Identifying Indicators etc.) and by an common index of words or concepts in alphabetical order. After each topic is a list of the numbered questions that address that topic.

Active Schematics: There are two pictures, one of the results accountability thinking process, and one of the performance accountability thinking process. You can click on any part of these schematics and go to the first question that address that particular element of the process.

Index of Tools: This is a separate list of all the tools, forms and pictures referenced in the text so you can look at these without going through all the answers.

Search: You can search the entire paper using a key word or phrase.

Case Studies: This is a separate list of all case examples so you can look at these without going through all the answers.

Tips

1. Use the navigation bar at the top of the page to get around the guide.
2. Remember, if you want to go to the previous page, use the **Back Key**.
3. For those with little time or patience, each page has a "**Short Answer**" at the top which can be read quickly, and a list of **Tips and Tools**.
4. When printing, the best copy may be obtained by setting your printer to print black and white only.

Read the Complete Paper in order just like a "regular paper" (And print it out if you like.) Start at the beginning. And when you get to the end, stop.

Advice from practitioners: Read advice on how to do this work from people who have actually done it, or are damn good at talking about it..

Resource list: Go directly to an inventory of written and organizational resources which might help. Many can be accessed on line directly from the guide.

If you can think of some other way you would like to use or access this guide, please **contact us** with your suggestions.

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

1.1 What are the basic ideas behind results and performance accountability, and results-based decision making and budgeting?

The Short Answer

- 1. Start with ends, work backward to means. What do we want? How will we recognize it? What will it take to get there?
- 2. Be clear and disciplined about language.
- 3. Use plain language, not exclusionary jargon.
- 4. Keep accountability for populations separate from accountability for programs and agencies.
 - a. Results are end conditions of well-being for populations: children, adults, families and communities.
 - b. Customer or client results are end conditions of well-being for customers of a program or agency.
- 5. Use data (indicators and performance measures) to gauge success or failure against a baseline.
- 6. Use data to drive a disciplined business-like decision making process to get better.
- 7. Involve a broad set of partners.
- 8. Get from talk to action as quickly as possible

Full Answer

- [The 5 minute or one page version](#)
- [Results decision making and budgeting Schematic](#)
- [The Language of Accountability](#)
- [Diagnosing Language Usage](#)
- [What about Mission, Vision, Values, Goals,](#)

Results and performance accountability starts with a crucial distinction: between results for whole populations like all children, all elders, all citizens - and results for the customers or clients of a particular program, agency or service system. The most important reason for this distinction is the difference in "who is accountable." Performance accountability can be assigned to the managers who run the various programs, agencies or service systems. Results accountability for populations can not be assigned to any one individual, organization or level of government. The whole

- Tools**
 - 1. [The Language of Accountability](#)
 - 2. [The 5 minute version of results and performance accountability](#)
 - 3. [Results decision making and budgeting Schematic](#)
 - 4. [Diagnosing Language Usage](#)
 - 5. [a SHIFT...from PROGRAMS to RESULTS](#)
 - 6. [Results accountability leads to new questions](#)
- Stories**
 - 1. [Tillamook County turns the curve on teen pregnancy](#)
 - 2. [MADD turns the curve on alcohol related traffic deaths.](#)
 - 3. [Other Case Studies](#)
- Tips**
 - 1. Use results examples from the newspaper and everyday life.
 - 2. If things go off track, always go back to the basic idea of what we want for children in plain language (e.g. "children are safe"= a result we want).
- Advice from:**
- Organizational Resources**
- References**

Objectives, Problems and Issues?

For a copy of the What Works Policy Brief: "Financing Reform, Reforming Finance, contact the Foundation Consortium at consortium.net

organization or level of government. The whole community, public and private sectors, must share responsibility for results.

Results accountability, results decision making and results budgeting are often used interchangeably. Here are some distinctions worth noting:

Results accountability is the overarching idea which includes results decision making and results budgeting. Accountability is by someone to someone for something. Results accountability is accountability BY THE COMMUNITY (city, county or state) TO

THE COMMUNITY (city, county or state) FOR THE WELL-BEING (RESULTS) OF A POPULATION (children, adults, families, all citizens...). *Results accountability is a different way of thinking.* It organizes the work of programs, agencies, communities, cities, counties and states around the end conditions we seek for those who live in our community. It uses these end conditions as the grounding for all of the work, including decision making and budgeting.

Results decision-making uses results (the desired conditions of well-being) as the starting point for making decisions. It is a business-like process that starts with ends and works backwards to means. It first defines success in measurable terms and uses those measures to gauge success or failure.

Results-based Budgeting is a particular kind of decision making, using results to steer the development of budgets. This includes budgets for population results which span across departments and beyond the formal boundaries of the agencies governed by the budget process itself. And it includes performance budgets which use client results to drive budgets for the programs, agencies and service systems of the city county state or nation.

Performance accountability is accountability BY managers TO stakeholders FOR the performance of a program, agency or service system. It involves identifying the most important performance measures for programs and agencies and holding managers accountable for doing a good job on those measures.

The Language of accountability: The most common problem in this work is the problem of language. People come to the table from many different disciplines and many different walks of life. And the way in which we talk about programs and services for children and families varies, literally, all over the map. This means that the usual state of affairs in planning for children and families is a Tower of Babel, where no one really knows what the other person is saying, but everyone politely pretends that they do. As a consequence, the work is slow, frustrating and often ineffective.

It is possible to exercise language discipline in this work. And the way to do this is to agree on a set of definitions that start with ideas and not words. Words are just labels for ideas. And the same idea can have many different labels. The following four ideas are the basis for definitions used at the beginning of this work. Alternative labels are offered:

Results (or outcomes or goals) are conditions of well-being for children, adults, families or communities, stated in plain English (or plain Spanish or plain Korean...). They are things that voters and taxpayers can understand. They are not about programs or agencies or government jargon. Results include: "healthy children, children ready for school, children succeeding in school, children staying out of trouble, strong families, safe communities."

Indicators (or benchmarks) are measures which help quantify the achievement of a result. They answer the question "How would we recognize these results in measurable terms if we fell over them?" So, for example, the rate of low-birthweight babies helps quantify whether we're getting healthy births or not. Third grade reading scores help quantify whether children are succeeding in school today, and whether they were ready for school three years ago. The crime rate helps quantify whether we are living in safe communities, etc.

Strategies are coherent collections of actions which have a reasoned chance of improving results. Strategies are made up of our best thinking about what works, and include the contributions of many partners. No single action by any one agency can create the improved results we want and need.

Performance Measures are measures of how well public and private programs and agencies are working. The most important performance measures tell us whether the clients or customers of the service are better off. We sometimes refer to these measures as client or customer results (to distinguish them from cross-community results for all children and families)

The principal distinction here is between ends and means. Results and indicators are about the ends we want for children and families. And strategies and performance measures are about the means to get there. Processes that fail to make these crucial distinctions often mix up ends and means. And such processes tend to get mired in the all-talk-no-action circles that have disillusioned countless participants in past efforts

It is possible to use the definitions above to "diagnose" the language usage of a group working on results and performance accountability. Two tools are included in this guide to help you do this. First is a [diagnosis technique](#) which provides a structure to analyze language usage and identify duplicative and

For a discussion of these concepts applied to all children 0 to 5

inconsistent use of language. Second is a [crosswalk tool](#) which allows any planning process to be crosswalked to the results and performance accountability framework in this guide.

healthy and ready for school, see "Results Accountability for Proposition 10 Commissioners." [Click here to go to the UCLA site to read this paper.](#)

The Results Accountability Thinking Process

Results accountability involves a very simple, but business-like, thinking process that can help direct the work of creating a strategy for improving the well-being of a population or subpopulation in a geographic area. It is a simple set of notions: "What do we want for this population in plain English?" "How would we recognize it in measurable terms?" "What will it take to get there?" [Click here to see this process displayed in graphic form.](#) In the following paragraphs we will take a quick pass at the basic ideas in each step of the thinking process. And then in later sections, we will go back and explore how to do each step in more detail.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Population: Results accountability starts with a whole population. A population might include all children in a county or state, or all elders, or all elders with a disability. Or it might include *all* the residents, and address the quality of life for all. The thinking process is the same whether the population in question is children, elders or whales.

Results: Results are conditions of well-being we would like to say exist for this population. These conditions are stated in plain English (plain Spanish, plain Vietnamese, plain Farsi...) not bureaucratic jargon. Results include such statements as "all children ready for school, all children safe, all children succeeding in school, strong and self sufficient families." They can also include such statements as: "our community with affordable housing for everyone," "our community with an adequate sustainable water supply," "our community without graffiti," "forrests not prone to devastating fire," "a prosperous economy," "a clean environment." These are statements that the public can understand, that can be used to anchor and communicate the basic purpose of the work. In fact, a result is ANY plain language statement of a condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities.

HOW WOULD WE RECOGNIZE IT?

The next two questions have to do with how we would recognize these conditions if we fell over them, first in terms of experience and then in terms of data.

Experience: How would we recognize these results in our day to day lives in the community? What would we see, hear, feel, observe? If the results is children healthy and ready for school, we would see children playing outside. We would hear young children with good communication skills. We would feel that children were respected and loved in our community.

Indicators: How would we recognize these conditions in measurable terms. Here we are looking for pieces of data that tell us whether these conditions exist or not. If the condition is child health, we might look at the rate of low birth-weight babies, or the rate of emergency room accidents. If

the result is "children succeeding in school" we might look at the percent of children reading at grade level or graduating from high school. Some of this data we currently have and can use today in the planning process. Other data, which we would like to have, becomes part of our data development agenda.

Baselines: For each indicator, we present a picture of where we've been and where we're headed if we stay on our current course. These pictures are called baselines. They allow us to define success as doing better than the baseline.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO GET THERE?

Story behind the baselines: Why do these baseline pictures look the way they do? What are the causes and forces at work? This is the epidemiology part of the work. Digging behind the pictures helps us get a handle on what's going on in our community and what might work to do better. As we do this work we bump up against things we wish we knew more about. This becomes part of our information/research agenda. We'll gather this information as best we can between meetings.

Partners: Who are the potential partners (people and agencies, public and private) who have a role to play in doing better?

What works: What do we think would work? What would it take to do better than the baselines in this community? What has worked in other places outside our community? What does the research tell us? Just importantly, what does our own personal experience tell us about what would work here? The answers should draw on the possible contributions of partners; and should involve no-cost and low-cost ideas.

Criteria: If we come up with a long list of things that might work, how do we choose what to actually do? What criteria should guide this selection process? Some criteria to think about include: specificity (Is the idea about specific action not rhetoric?), leverage (Will it make a big or little difference?), values (Is it consistent with our personal and community values?), and reach (Is it feasible to do it this year, next year or 3 to 10 years?).

Strategy, action plan and budget: What do we propose to actually do? This should take the form of a multi-year strategy and action plan laying out what is to be accomplished by when. We can then assign responsibilities and get started. Once you decide on things to be done, projects, programs, no-cost and low-cost actions etc. you can use performance measures to track their progress.

This does not have to take forever. You can take a pass at this thinking process in an hour or so. And then go through it again each time you get together. Every time you iterate this process, your action plan gets better.

Performance Accountability Thinking Process:

Be clear about what program or agency is being measured. The first order of business in picking the right performance measures is being clear about what program or agency is being measured.

This is a "fence drawing" problem. First we draw a fence around the thing to be measured. It could be a program, like child care center , or a component of a program with some organizational identity, like infant child care. Or it could be an entire organization or agency, like a residential treatment center, or a department of social services. Or it could be an entire service system, like the entire child welfare or child care service system, involving many agencies and their programs.

Next we ask ourselves a few questions about what's inside the fence. Who are our customers? Customers include the direct recipients or beneficiaries of the service. But they also include others who depend on the program's performance, like related programs and partners. For example, the customers of child care program include the children of the program, but also the parents of those children, and also the local elementary school where many of these children will enter kindergarten. It is important to consider the full range of customers, because, just like in business, success depends on doing a good job for your customers.

Consider the four types of performance measures and choose the most important.

All performance measures fit into one of four categories, derived from the intersection of quantity and quality vs. effort and effect.

	QUANTITY	QUALITY
EFFORT	<u>What did we do?</u> How much service did we deliver?	<u>How well did we do it?</u> How well did we deliver service?
EFFECT	<u>Is anyone better off (#)?</u> How much change for the better did we produce	<u>Is anyone better off (%)?</u> What quality of change for the better did we produce?

Not all performance measures are of equal importance. There are two general classes of performance measures that are most important: those that tell whether the service and its related functions are done well (upper right quadrant). These measures include such things as timeliness of service, accessibility, cultural competence, turnover rate and morale of staff. These measures are used by managers to steer the administration of the program. If things are late, they work to make them timely. If turnover is high, they work to retain staff.

The most important measures tell us whether our clients or customers are better off as a consequence of receiving the service (lower right quadrant). We call these measures "client or customer results" These are measures which gauge the effect of the service on peoples lives.

Usually, in programs which directly deliver services to people client results have to do with four

dimensions of "better-offness." Skills, attitude, behavior and circumstance. Did their skills improve; did their attitude change for the better, did their behavior change for the better, is their life circumstance improved in some demonstrable way? So, for example, if you are overseeing a child care program, you would want to measure such things as the percent of children with basic literacy skills (skills), the percent of children with a positive self image (attitude); the percent of children exhibiting disruptive behavior (behavior) and the percent of children who are up to date on their immunizations, and the percent who go on to succeed in 1st grade (circumstance).

Don't accept lack of control as an excuse. Now the first thing you're going to say is "Wait a minute. What does child care have to do with whether or not children are up to date on immunizations? This is a good example of a performance measure where child care has very little control over whether the circumstance improves. Child care can make a contribution to the immunization status of its clients. Quality child care can help parents and children understand the importance of regular preventive health care and can help parents understand and access the health care system. But child care by itself can not do these things. So isn't it unfair to track immunization rates for children in care?"

If you look at the other measures listed for child care (literacy skills, self image, disruptive behavior, first grade success) you will notice that these measures are also beyond the capacity of the child care provider to completely control. And the point is that all programs performance measures are affected by many factors beyond the particular program's control. This lack of control is usually used as an excuse for not doing performance measurement at all. Turnover rate, staff morale, you name it is "beyond my control".

In fact, the more important the performance measure (e.g. children successful in 1st grade) the less control the program has over it. This is a paradox at the heart of doing performance measurement well. If control were the overriding criteria for performance measures then there would be no performance measures at all. The first thing that we must do in performance measurement is get past the control excuse, and acknowledge that we must use measures we do not completely control.

Create a performance accountability system useful to managers. - one that takes this control paradox into account. We do this in three ways. First, we ask managers to assess their performance on these measures - not on the basis of some absolute standard - or on how other providers are doing - but on whether they are doing better than their own history. We do this using the same technique used for cross community indicators: the notion of baseline. For each performance measure we ask managers to present a baseline of the history of their program's performance, and where their performance is headed. We ask them to do better than their own baseline.

This is the central way in which businesses use data. How are we doing compared to our own history. Later when you have the sophistication and the data, you can begin to develop and use comparisons to the performance of other similar providers with similar mixes of easy and hard cases. And later still, we can compare to standards, when we know what good performance looks like.

In some services, like child care, we have progressed to the point where we have standards for the first type of performance measure above. In child care we know what quality service delivery looks like. We have standards for staffing ratios, percent of staff with certain qualifications, timeliness of service, safety etc.

Next we ask managers to think about the partners who have a role to play in doing better. Programs cannot produce the most important results for customers by themselves.

And, finally managers must ask and answer: What works to improve performance?" Out of this thinking we ask managers to present their best thinking about what needs to be done.

This thinking process is summarized in the [Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability](#). These questions should be asked and answered at every intersection between a supervisor and a subordinate throughout the system.

1.2 How is this different from all the other approaches we've seen over the years? Why is this not just the latest fad?

The Short Answer

1. Maybe this *is* just another fad. How well it is done will determine that.

2. But the results themselves (conditions of well-being for children, adults, families and communities) are here to stay. Results like "all children healthy and ready for school" will still be important in 100 years.

3. The framework is simple and yet complete. It addresses accountability from the highest level view across systems and across communities to accountability for the smallest program in the bureaucracy, and everything in between. And it gets from talk to action *fast* (the major source of cynicism and failure in the past.)

4. The notion of using data to gauge our success has been part of almost all successful enterprises in the past. It is here to stay in work on population well-being and program performance.

5. One of the biggest differences is the clear distinction between community accountability for population results vs. manager accountability for program client results. These have been badly mixed up in the past. Without making this distinction clear, we make managers think that their program is a failure unless they can demonstrate a measurable impact on population well-being. It is rare that any one program can do this. This same thinking leads to the mistake of assigning responsibility for population change to just one agency (e.g. the Public Health Director is *responsible* for "healthy children") when we know this result can not be accomplished without the work of many public and private sector partners.

6. The performance measurement framework discussed in this guide breaks with past work in a number of ways. It skips weeks, months, sometime years of analysis, flow charts, program descriptions and other "preparation," and goes directly to the identification of performance measures. Most people know their program well enough to identify performance measures right

Tools

1. [The 5 minute version of results and performance accountability](#)

Stories

1. [Case Studies](#)

Tips

1. Don't be defensive. There is no one right answer. If people prefer another way of doing this work, that's OK.
 2. When things get off track, always go back to the results - the conditions of well-being- the common purpose, the common ground, that all can agree to.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

away without a lot of preliminaries. It starts by sorting the program's performance measures into common sense plain English categories (How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?). Then, starting with the data you have, the most important 3 to 5 "headline" performance measures are chosen, and these measures are then used in a disciplined process to engage partners and get from talk to the actions necessary to improve performance. The entire process is summarized in [7 questions](#), and a first pass can be [accomplished in about about an hour](#), not weeks months or years. Every iteration of the 7 questions improves the action plan. See also [Get to the Point Planning](#).

Full Answer

Results and performance accountability could be a fad. But population results and client results are here to stay. Healthy children or safe communities will be just as important 50 years from now as today. Programs which improve the lives of their clients in measurable ways will be valued above others as long as programs exist. So the foundation of the work – the notion of well being in plain language and then in measurable terms – is, almost certainly, enduring.

For these very same reasons, results and performance accountability is not new. There have been many past efforts which attempt to structure our thinking, planning, budgeting and management processes around getting results.

These are some of the reasons why results and performance accountability in some form is here to stay. What is different about this particular approach?

- (1) **Not just any approach**: First, the approach discussed in this paper is not just any approach which happens to use the words “ result,” “outcome” or "performance measure," but a specific coherent framework articulated in a series of papers over a 5 year period by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, The Finance Project, The Foundation Consortium and the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities. (See [references](#).) If you look at the entire body of work on population and performance accountability you will find that they use different words but the underlying concepts are convergent with this framework ([See cross walk: Answer 1.8](#)).
- (2) **Language discipline**: The definitions used in this framework start with ideas, not words. Words are just labels for ideas, and one idea can have many different labels. Rather than get hung up on which word is used, the framework starts with three central ideas and allows different states counties, cities and communities to attach whatever labels work for them. (See the [Language of Accountability](#).)
- (3) **Simple and complete**: The framework is simple, and yet accounts for everything from the highest level view of whole populations to the smallest program and everything in between. It can function at the community, city, county, state or national level. And it can be applied to both public and private sector roles and responsibilities. It is, in fact, a fractal, using the same basic thinking process at every level of "magnification." (See [Results and Performance Budgeting Formats - Volume I and II](#).)

- (4) **The framework clearly distinguishes population accountability from program or agency accountability.** These are two profoundly different types of accountability that often get mixed up together. This framework treats them separately, for a very simple reason. Accountability for population well-being can not be pinned on any one person or organization. (The health of all children in the County is not the sole responsibility of the county, the state, the federal government or any of the many public and private partners who have a role to play. It is by definition a shared responsibility. Program and agency accountability, on the other hand, can be assigned to the manager of the program or agency.
- (5) **Direct and business-like:** The framework uses data driven decision making at every level. It gets quickly to the heart of the matter. Where other approaches take weeks, months or years, the basic questions at both the population level and program level can be answered for the first time in one hour. (See the [Turn the Curve Exercise \(for populations\)](#).) This approach gets directly to measurement in the form of indicators and performance measures. It *breaks with the past* military model of mission goals and objectives and goes directly to the questions: “What do you want? How will you recognize it in measurable terms when you get it?” “What will it take to get there?”
- (6) **Breaks with the past on the relationship between population and program accountability.** The relationship between population and program accountability is not linear. This may sound like an arcane technicality, but it is a profound break with the past. In most previous efforts (and many current efforts), there is a continuous progression from population well-being to agency and program performance. For example, “Healthy children” flows seamlessly (in a single line) to the Health Department and down to its various programs like childhood immunization. In the results and performance accountability framework, there is a break after the population in the “chain of responsibility.” No one agency is responsible for any population result. Imagine many lines connecting Healthy children to all of the public and private agencies and partners.
- (7) **Instead of treating accountability as just one seamless continuum from population to programs, we treat population and programs, in this framework, as the two profoundly different things they are.** For those of you with an interest in the history of this work, this last point is worth emphasizing. We develop each (population and performance accountability) and describe about how they are different but connected.

This is in fact true to the way the world really works. There are individuals who are solely accountable for programs and agencies. There are not individuals solely accountable for any aspect of population well-being, whether its the environment the economy or the well-being of children and families.

Treating these two kinds of accountability as different, not a seamless continuum, dispels the myth that population responsibility can in fact be lodged in one place in our political and cultural system. This myth has lead to inappropriate blame when

things go wrong and inappropriate credit when things go right. But more importantly, it has led to a history of isolation and fragmentation in matters of public policy. "If others in my community are not accountable why should they spend political capital to make me successful? And if I alone am responsible, why should I dilute my credit for success by involving others. The myth is a powerful disincentive to collaborate."

So results accountability, as crafted here, and as distinct from performance accountability, is arguably an antidote for the continual erosion of our sense of collective responsibility.

(8) Past work on performance measurement has often created thousands of pages of useless paper and wasted untold hours of time. "If it's not useful to managers, don't do it." The performance measurement framework discussed in this guide breaks with past work in a number of ways. It skips **mission vision values goals objectives** and goes directly to the identification of performance measures. (The useful parts of mission vision and values can be done later) Most people know their program well enough to identify performance measures right away without weeks or months of preliminaries. The process sorts the measures into common sense categories based on the quantity and quality of effort and effect. (How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?). The process does not allow the excuse "I don't have any data." It starts with the data you have and identifies a data development agenda to get better in the future. The 3 to 5 most important "headline" performance measures are chosen from those currently available based on their power to communicate with stakeholders and how well they get at the heart of the program. These measures are then used in a disciplined process to engage partners, identify what works to improve performance and get from talk to action. The entire process is summarized in **7 questions**, and a first pass at it can be **accomplished in about an hour**, not weeks months or years. Every iteration of the 7 questions improves the action plan. And it's simple enough that it can be used at every intersection of a supervisor and subordinate throughout the system. Instead of thousands of pages of useless paper you have new tools for managers to use to run their programs, that link readily to budget development and public accountability processes.

1.3 How do we get people to care about this work?

The Short Answer

- 1. Appeal to their sense of right and wrong.
- 2. Appeal to their self interest.

Full Answer

(1) **Appeal to their sense of right and wrong: Improving the well-being of children and families is the right thing to do. Doing it in a disciplined way is the right way to do it.**

(2) **Appeal to their self interest: If people don't care because it's the right thing to do, the best way to get people to care about anything is to understand and appeal to their self interest. When it comes to the well being of children and families one clear area of self interest for most decision makers is the enormous amount we as a society pay when things go wrong. Unless we take actions now to invest in children and families, we will pay and inevitable escalating cost when things go wrong. This is not just good social policy, it's good fiscal policy. See 2.17 [How do we create a Cost of Bad Results report and what do we do with it?](#)**

(3) **[The "Partners Profiles"](#) tool provides first person reasons to "invest" in children and families from the perspective of over 20 different partners. Some of these paragraphs, or the document as a whole, may be helpful in winning support.**

(4) **[See also the answer to 1.7](#) : What do we do with people who are cynical and burned out from the last time we tried this?**

Tools
1. Partners Profiles
Stories
1. Case Studies
Tips
1. Emphasize ends. Be flexible about means.
Advice from:
1. Advice from Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan
Organizational Resources
References

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

1.4 Where do we start?

The Short Answer

1. Anywhere leads to everywhere. It doesn't matter where you start, you will eventually get to everything.
2. Start where people are passionate.
3. Don't let outsiders tell you where to start. Start where it feels right for your county, city or community.
4. The work can proceed on *parallel* tracks. Don't let the work be structured as a long sequence.
5. Get from talk to action as quickly as possible. Make sure there is an action track to turn a curve early in the work.

Full Answer

- (1) The most important principle here is to **start where you are.** As Con Hogan of Vermont says: "Anywhere leads to everywhere." ([Click here to see Con Hogan's chart.](#)) The work is iterative and you can pick up new pieces of the work on the next iterative pass. As long as you eventually get to all or most of the pieces, you can begin anywhere.
- (2) Start with what people are passionate about. Create a table to take action to turn a curve. Demonstrate that disciplined thinking can produce results. Then apply that discipline to other areas.
- (3) The second important principle is that the work is not linear but should proceed along parallel tracks. [Here is a basic action plan that could be used to steer the work.](#)
- (4) A more complex and more complete version of this action plan is presented in "[A Strategy](#)

Tools

1. [Anywhere leads to Everywhere - C. Hogan's chart](#)
2. [A Basic Action Plan Outline](#)

Stories

1. [Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets](#)

Tips

1. Don't try to do too much too soon. One success will build on the one before.
2. Getting to action should be your first priority.

Advice from:

1. [Yolie Flores Aguilar, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, and Jacquelyn McCroskey, Member and DATA Committee Chair, LA Children's Planning Council](#)

Organizational Resources

References

[Map for Results-based Budgeting.](#)" The schematic version of this is given as a tool below. The full paper which describes this chart may be accessed through the [Finance Project website.](#)

(5) Not only is the work parallel within a community, city, county or state, it is also parallel between them. That is to say, the work may proceed at each level independent of the others. [\(See: 1.11 How do we do this if the levels above us \(e.g. federal, state, county, city\) don't care and won't help?\):](#)

(6) The notion of pathways: there is no one right way to do this work. While this paper presents a particular sequence in which to do the work ([results - indicators - baselines - story behind the baselines - partners - what works - strategy, action plan and budget](#)), there are in fact many Apathways® through these steps in the thinking process that are equally workable and effective. The chart below shows the thinking process of results-based decision making and the arrows describe different pathways through this thinking process. (To be developed)

(7) Where data is a particular problem, as is often the case in communities, the process can follow a pathway where experience and the data development agenda serve as proxies for indicators. In other words, the top of the chart lists the population and results as usual. But the work on indicators yields only an experiential version of the results and a data development agenda. These can be used as proxies for indicators in this way: Ask "What works to produce the experiences we want? What would it take to impact the data development measures if we had them/" While these questions can be used to get started, the obvious problem is that you will not know how to measure progress. There will be no curve to turn. See 2.9 [What do we do if we don't have any good data at all?](#)

(8) Some starting points for the legislative branch can be found in the ["11 Things a Legislature could consider to advance results accountability."](#)

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

1.5 **How do we get people together to do this work?**

The Short Answer

(1) Organizational:

(a) **Build on existing forums:** collaboratives, children's cabinets, coalitions, family and child advocacy organizations and United Ways or similar convening organizations.

(b) Create tables where people can work on what they are passionate about. Use the results framework to keep these processes disciplined. And make sure they get from talk to action quickly.

(2) Political:

(a) The well-being of children and families is often a area of non-partisan common ground. Use this to leverage joint sponsorship of the creation of collaborative and oversight structures, the creation of Children's report cards and other tools, and the use of results and performance measures in budgeting.

(b) Accountability for results is powerful rhetoric. Call the question and use it for real change. Be smart about creating a win-win visible success and building on it.

Full Answer

Part 1: Organizational considerations: In many places there are already natural forums where work on results for children and families is or can be lodged. These include:

- (1) **Children's collaboratives:** These usually include public and private sector partners in formal structure established in

Tools
1. Links to Report Card Web sites
Stories
1. San Mateo County's Children's Summit Moves 350 Participants from Talk to Action.
Tips
1. Find common ground. 2. Share credit.
Advice from:
1. Advice from Susan Ferren, Project Coordinator for the San Mateo County's Children's Report and Summit 2. Advice from Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan
Organizational Resources
1. The Finance Project 2. The National Conference of State Legislatures 3. The National Governor's Association 4. National Association of Counties 5. Conference of Mayors
References
1. "Informed Consent: Advice for State and Local Leaders on Implementing Results-Based Decisionmaking," Sara Watson. Finance Project . 2000

state or local law (See Cal 997 councils, etc.)

- (2) **Children's cabinets:** These are usually governmental entities made up of the "cabinet" level officers responsible for major departments with services for children and families (including: social services, health, mental health, education, juvenile justice). Education may or may not be a part of such cabinets depending on the political relationship (organizational and personal) of the Super indent to the rest of state, county or city government. (See Maryland and Contra Costa County)

- (3) **Children's coalitions:** These are usually less formal alliances of advocacy organizations which may or may not include public sector partners. (See Philadelphia Coalition for Kids which produced "Report Card 2000: The Well-Being of Children and Youth in Philadelphia")



- (4) **Individual Family and Child advocacy organizations:** In some states, counties and cities there is one or more advocacy organizations which can sponsor the work. (See California Children's Advocacy Institute which produced the "California Children's Budget Data Report" series, or Family Action of Sonoma County.)



- (5) **United Way or similar "neutral" organization:** United Ways have been central to the organization of results accountability efforts for children and families (and other populations such as the elderly) in many counties and cities across the country. Because United Ways often undertake strategic planning efforts spanning the community they are natural sponsors of the development and use of results, indicators, report cards etc. Examples of United Ways taking leadership roles in results accountability include the United Way of Santa Cruz California, the United Way of Indianapolis, Indiana, the Lehigh Valley United Way in Bethlehem Pennsylvania, the Metro United Way in Louisville, Kentucky, the United Way and Community Chest of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Aloha United Way in Honolulu, and others.

It is rare to find a county or city without one or more of these kinds of organizational platforms in place. It is almost always best to use one of these (or preferably all of these) as the sponsors of the work.

An interesting dilemma lies in the question: Is it better for this work to lie inside or outside of government? My view is that the work will have the greatest long lasting effect if it is recognized or sanctioned by state, county and city governments. The intent of results accountability is to move decision makers to invest in strategies that will measurably improve the well-being of children and families. Many of the most important investment decisions lie in the public sector budget and political processes. And government use of these planning tools and techniques will more likely lead to influence of the significant dollars already spent on children and family services. (As of 2001: Inside government – see Contra Costa County; Outside government see Sonoma County.)

There are several important reasons why government budget offices should develop Family and Children's budgets. First is credibility. Second, a children's budget developed "inside" the budget process has a greater chance of influencing the budget while it is still under development.

Part 2: Political considerations:

(1) **The power of children and families issues:** The well-being of children and families is often an area of political common ground. For this reason it is sometimes possible to make progress on results accountability without the usual political wrangling. This means that actions to sponsor the creation of a children's council, the authorization of a children's budget, or hearings on specific results may be taken with bi-partisan support.

(2) **The power of accountability:** It always sounds like good stewardship to press for accountability through the business like use of data.

(a) This can work for population well-being (all children, all families etc.) but is much less often seen there. This is partly or mostly because there is no single entity to "hold accountable." It must therefore take the form of a series of questions: "How are WE doing for children and families in this state/county/city? How can WE do better?" The political energy for this work can sometimes be garnered from the "embarrassment factor." Is the state/county/city doing worse than comparable jurisdictions? Are there some numbers (like reading scores or juvenile violent crime) that are in the media and can be used as jumping off points?

(b) Performance measurement, on the other hand is much more straightforward. Is the bureaucracy performing as it should? Few can argue with the need to test performance of programs and agencies and hold the managers of those programs and agencies accountable. The trick is to find a useful version of this process. Most past performance accountability processes have been paper exercises that are rightly ignored in both the executive and legislative branches. The point of greatest leverage is of course the budget process. And the logical starting point is to use this as a platform to test the use performance data to *inform* decisions. Pick a process that can start small, prove its utility and then be brought to scale.

(2) **Political capital, reelection and the chances of success:** The chance of success is probably the key political consideration. Success, in political terms, means some tangible accomplishment which gets good publicity, builds political capital and helps with reelection. With term limits, this often means that some tangible accomplishment must be produced in a fairly short period. Program performance improvements can be produced relatively quickly - another reason why this is the easier thing to do. Population well-being takes a lot longer to turn around. How can the need for short term success be squared with the long term nature of progress on population indicators? It is often possible to use the concept of "investing" in children and families, and the plausible effects on later health and safety as the bridge. Other tangible accomplishments include report cards, results hearings in the area of child population well-being. Attached is a list of [11 things a legislature could consider](#) doing to advance results and performance accountability.

Another political consideration when using population or performance data is that the data may not "look good." Someone must therefore be at fault. If data is not improved over the course of a given term, that fault may boomerang. By some calculations it is better not to look at the data than to take the political risk of being blamed for the data. The high visibility response to this involves courage and the use of political capital. A lower visibility route may make sense in highly volatile political environments. The use of bi-partisan or non-partisan approaches may also help defuse political risk. The bottom line is that political leaders have a political stake in the well-being of children and families. Most are genuinely interested in progress, both short and long term, and are willing to support sensible actions to advance well-being. The politics of that progress can usually be managed if the problems are seen as "no-ones fault" and the credit for success is shared among the many partners who contributed.

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1.6 **Where do we start in a (state, county, city or community) that wants to do this? Where do we start in one that doesn't want to do this?**

The Short Answer

- 1. For a community that wants to do this, use the mainstream political structures in a broad based partnership.
- 2. For a community that doesn't want to do this, use existing, or if necessary, new advocacy organizations or coalitions to get started, and seek mainstream political support.

Full Answer

Much of the long answer can be found in the answer to question [1.4 "Where do I start?"](#) - which offers choices about starting points and tracks of work, and boils down to "start where you are."

Given the answer to this question, a community that "wants" to do this is more likely to have the mainstream support of government, and it will be possible to craft broadly based sponsorship that includes the executive and/or legislative branches of government. It will be possible to proceed simultaneously on all or most of the parallel tracks discussed above.

Where states, counties, cities or communities "don't want" to do this, it is probably necessary for advocacy organizations, alone or in combination, to start the work and later bring in governmental partners.

Some starting points for the legislative branch can be found in the ["11 Things a Legislature could consider to advance results accountability."](#)

Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Anywhere leads to Everywhere - CHogan's chart2. A Basic Action Plan Outline3. Results accountability leads to new questions
Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets
Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Start where people are, not where you want them to be.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. "Informed Consent: Advice for State and Local Leaders on Implementing Results-Based Decisionmaking," Sara Watson, Finance Project, 2000

1.7	What do we do with people who are cynical and burned out from the last time we tried this?
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The Short Answer

1. Acknowledge that some cynicism is justified.
2. Get to action quickly. Taking action which makes a difference is the best cure for cynicism.
3. Jettison jargon.
4. Involve respected partners.
5. Recognize that some people will never come around.

Full Answer

This is a big problem. There have been many past efforts that have been all talk and no action. People are rightly cynical about new efforts which promise change.

(1) Perhaps the most important thing to do with such cynicism is to recognize its validity. People have heard “this will be different” enough times to be justifiably suspicious.

(2) The second most important thing to do is to have a track of work which gets to action quickly. Don’t involve the cynical people in the parts of the process that will take months to get to a tangible product or action. Get them involved in a turn the curve process which gets lots of partners actively involved in creating and implementing a strategy to turn a particular curve (whether it’s graffiti or juvenile crime or the drop out rate). Taking action which makes a difference is the best cure for cynicism.

(3) It may also be helpful to help them understand the idea of results, the conditions of well-being you want for your children, families and community, stated in plain language. They may have been put off by all the jargon used in past efforts. If you can sit down and say, “Here’s what’s important: children are born healthy, they’re ready for school, they succeed in school, they grow up to be productive and contributing adults, we live in a safe and supportive community.” These conditions may turn out to be things they also think of as important. If you can then show how the

Tools
1. Food, candy, sedatives...
Stories
Tips
1. Don't be defensive. 2. Don't overpromise. 3. Don't spend too much psychological energy on this.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

work will move from rhetoric about these good things to some meaningful action, they may be more inclined to participate.

(4) Don't create new cynics. The best way to do this is to waste people's time at endless meetings. Make sure your meetings are crisp and business like and action oriented. (See the "Agenda" overhead)

(5) Involve respected partners in this work. Sponsors who are serious will add credibility.

(6) Finally, recognize that there are some people who will never come around. Be realistic about when it is time to cut your losses and let a partner go... for the time being. But If that person is important in the (state, county city or community) come back to them later (or periodically) and check in. If your effort really is making a difference, they may want to sign on later. Success will attract partners you never thought possible.

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1.8 How do we fit together different approaches when there is more than one approach to results and performance accountability being used in my area?

The Short Answer

1. Use a cross walk to let people see how different frameworks are related. While terminology and structure may vary, most approaches are actually trying to accomplish the same thing and differ principally in the labels used for ideas and .
2. The crosswalk tool presented in this guide can be used to:
 - Defuse tension and let people see how their work fits together.
 - Analyze different frameworks for completeness, and add missing components
 - Merge approaches, although one must be careful not to create a hybrid that is worse than either parent.

Full Answer

- (1) The words “result” and “outcome” are now commonly used in many different efforts and many different publications. These words are often used without any discipline about their meaning or the larger framework into which they fit.
- (2) There are many different published approaches and efforts under way in the area of results and performance accountability. It is not uncommon for more than one to be actively used in the same state, county, city or community. Most frameworks that are being used address only program or agency performance. A few have tried to address both population results and program performance, but most of these have fallen prey to the trap that there is a linear relationship between population and performance accountability (e.g. The result "healthy children" is the responsibility of the Health Department; the result "safe communities" is the responsibility of the police department.) (TX, NC)

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Choosing a Common Language2. Crosswalk - blank3. Crosswalk - to Logic Model(s)4. 4 Quadrant link to other performance measure terms
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

One way to help bring these efforts together is to use a cross walk to let people see how they are related. Much of the best work in this field is headed in the same direction. While terminology and structure may vary, the different approaches are actually trying to accomplish much the same thing. This work is “convergent.”

(3) A crosswalk is a tool that shows how the elements of a framework and the words that label them are related. The oldest version of a crosswalk is the Rosetta Stone which crosses Egyptian Hieroglyphics with Greek and Latin. A version of this is shown in the attached [Language Menu chart](#). More sophisticated crosswalks allow the direct comparison of not just language but ideas and thinking processes. The attached Crosswalk Tool arrays the framework thinking process used in this guide down the left side of the page. This shows population accountability at the top of the page and performance accountability at the bottom, and the sequence of steps in each thinking process. Two blank columns are provided to the right. The far right column is used to show the corresponding terminology and thinking process from another framework. Each entry is the term used in the alternative framework which corresponds to the concept/term on the left. The middle column is a space where examples could be shown. One completed form is provided which crosswalks results and performance accountability to the Logic Model used by the United Way for performance measurement.

You can use these crosswalks in a number of different ways.

(a) To help allow different frameworks to coexist and defuse tension between different approaches. The cross walks can make the point that the work we are trying to do is basically the same and here's how they relate to one another. There is no need for you to stop doing what you're doing. (Although we may both learn something from each other about how to do it better.)

(b) To analyze differences between two frameworks. It is possible to see where one framework is more complete than another or uses a different thinking process for the same set of ideas. For example, the logic model thinking process works up the page (from inputs to process to outputs to outcomes) while the results and performance framework works down the page (from clients to client outcomes to baselines, what works and an action plan and budget). It is possible to see that most frameworks in current use address only performance accountability and not population accountability; and that some logic model frameworks leave out upper right quadrant performance measures which address things like timeliness, staff turnover, and cultural competence of services. This kind of analysis could be used to make these other frameworks more complete.

(c) To help merge different approaches for a state, county, city or community. It would be possible using this crosswalk to agree on a common thinking process and set of terminology that bridges two different approaches. The caution here is that you don't produce a "transporter accident." One must be careful not to create a hybrid that is worse than either parent. The resulting framework must be conceptually clear and coherent. For example, it would be possible for agencies and programs to use the logic model thinking process to develop client outcomes

[Blank Crosswalk](#)
[Crosswalk to Logic Model / United Way](#)
[4 Quadrant link to Other Performance Measurement Terms](#)

(instead of the 4 quadrant method) and then pick up with the performance accountability thinking process from client outcomes to baselines, to partners, what works and an action plan and budget.

1.9 How can we work on long term well-being in a political environment with term limits and demands for immediate success?

The Short Answer

- 1. "Doing things to get reelected" is a legitimate concern of elected officials. Look for ways in which work to turn the curves on child and family well-being can be "good news" for elected officials.
2. Short term progress vs. long term progress is a false choice. We need both and can produced both. See the Progress Report Prototype.
3. The best way to create room for a long term agenda for children and families is to have short term successes to celebrate. Recognize that these short term successes will most likely be traditional accomplishments, like opening a community center or performance measure improvements like increasing child support collections.
4. The use of business-like models to present the baselines and what it will take to turn them can bring a refreshing honesty and discipline to the process and may make even those with a short time horizon more receptive. A cost of bad results analysis can convey the fiscal urgency of action and the potential fiscal payoffs in both the short and long term.

Full Answer

It is natural for political processes to focus on short term success. The re-election process demands that elected officials have accomplishments to show the voters, and promises of long term success or benefits down the road don't cut it. How then is it possible to advance work on results accountability which may take years to pay off?

(1) The answer lies in not allowing this to be framed as an "either or" question. Short term progress vs. long term progress is a false choice. Most elected officials go into public office because they are concerned about the quality of life in their communities or districts. Quality of

Tools
1. Progress Report Prototype
Stories
1. Some examples of short term progress on indicators
2. Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets
Tips
Advice from:
1. Advice from Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan
Organizational Resources
References
1. "The Matter of Evidence: A Short Treatise on the Rules of Evidence in Budget Court" on the FPSI website.

life is what results are about. Any condition of well-being that can be stated in plain language is a result. “Communities with healthy children” and “Communities without graffiti” are both results statements.

.....(2) In some cases it is possible to make progress quickly (in one election cycle) on an indicator. The most politically popular indicator on which to make progress is the “crime rate,” often used as an indicator of safe communities. There are numerous examples of real progress on crime rates in selected cities and neighborhoods. In 1996, Boston got serious about the juvenile homicide rate and cut it to zero for two and one half years. New York City's work on reducing the crime rate is controversial, but the numbers are unambiguous. Several states, including Missouri, Oregon, and Maryland have made progress on childhood immunization rates in about 18 to 24 months.

Many if not most indicator curves will take years to show change from the baseline. Elected officials will always be pressing for quick “results.” How do you deal with that? It may not be the answer you expect, but deal with it honestly. Elected officials are tired of false promises from the bureaucracy. An honest assessment of how hard this is and what it will take may actually be a breath of fresh air.

(3) And this is where the discipline part of results accountability pays off. If you can show in a business like way, the baseline, the causes, the partners who have a role to play, and what it will take to turn the curve, you are more likely to be given credence than someone who promises that "money for my program will solve the problem." What has been missing from much of the work on long term progress is this kind of discipline (and this kind of honesty). And lack of discipline leads to lack of credibility. Budget committees are jaded about the false claims of agencies and programs seeking more funding. To be successful you must understand the rules of the game: how budget processes work, how they use information, what passes as evidence (See "The Matter of Evidence: A Short Treatise on the Rules of Evidence in Budget Court" on the [FPSI website](#) . The results accountability framework displayed in the [Talk to Action schematic](#) closely mirrors business planning processes. It will help get business leaders to the table. And the use of business like forms (see [Budget formats: Volume I and II](#)) will help present investments in children and families as good fiscal policy, not just good social policy.

(4) The Cost of Bad Results analysis can play a role in bridging from short term to long term perspective. The cost of bad results analysis shows the baseline for the costs of remediating the problems of children and families after they occur. These costs are often treated as entitlement or quasis entitlement programs in the state or local budget process. Any elected official with an interest in the budget process will be familiar with at least some pieces of this analysis. But the analysis as a whole will most likely show that remediation costs are consuming an increasing portion of discretionary dollars. And the sooner we get serious about slowing growth in these costs the sooner we will see reduced pressure to spend scarce general funds on remediation, the more money there will be for other priorities, and such actions may even lessen pressure on tax policy. Seealso 2.17 [How do we create a Cost of Bad Results report and what do we do with it?](#)

(5) Finally, the best way to create room for a long term agenda for children and families is to have short term successes to celebrate. Such successes add credibility and momentum to the overall

effort. So make sure that the planning work has a good mix of short term accomplishments to show. Recognize that these short term successes will most likely be traditional accomplishments, like opening a community center or performance measure improvements like increasing child support collection. We have traditionally settled for these kind of accomplishments as the end. Now we can see them as means to the ends of better results for children and families. And they can also be leverage for sustained interest in those long term ends. See also 2.21 [How do we report on progress?](#)

1.10 How is this work different in the executive branch vs. legislative branch?

The Short Answer

- 1. The best work is a partnership between the executive and legislative branches. A results framework which starts with the well-being of children and families can provide common ground for political players and make executive and legislative partnerships easier to create.
- 2. Executive branch roles can include: Creation of a children's cabinet, creation of a children's report card or budget, sponsorship of a "turn the curve" table and use of client results (performance measures) in budgeting.
- 3. Legislative branch roles can include: Authorization of state and local children's collaboratives, children's report cards and children's budgets, holding results hearings, and using results for all children and client results for programs in budget hearings.

Full Answer

(1) The best work on results and performance accountability is in fact a cooperative effort between the executive and legislative branches of government. It is normal for there to be an adversarial relationship between the executive and legislative branches. Even where that is a deeply entrenched part of the culture, it is possible for the two branches to create the infrastructure necessary to establish state and local partnerships, to establish children's report cards and children's budgets, and to cooperate on developing strategies to measurably improve the well-being of children and families. (In one state, the work on results was seen as an exclusively executive branch enterprise. The legislature decided to undertake its own version of results. The two efforts diverged. Neither took hold and lasted.)

Tools

- 1. [11 Things a Legislature could consider to advance results accountability](#)
- 2. [An Exercise to Design a Legislative Results Hearing](#)
- 3. [An Exercise to Design a Legislative Performance Hearing](#)

Stories

- 1. In one (unnamed) state, the executive branch did not involve the legislature in development of results and indicators. The work was unnecessarily adversarial and was not sustained past the next gubernatorial election.
- 2. The Vermont legislature authorized 10 results in law in the 1998 session.
- 3. The Oregon legislature established the Oregon Progress Board and has endorsed the Benchmarks for successive biennial sessions since 1988.

Tips

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

(2) In states and counties where issues of child and family well-being are addressed in a non-partisan or bi-partisan manner, executive and legislative branch partnerships are easier to create and sustain.

Results for children and families (like "all children ready for school," "all children succeeding in school," "stable and self sufficient families") are statements of ends, not means. And using a results framework allows political players to find common ground in a set of results statements, even where they continue to disagree about means.

(3) The relative roles and power relationships between the executive and legislative branches vary from state to state, county to county and city to city. So a simple summary is not possible. Following are some examples of executive and legislative branch roles:

(4) The executive branch role is usually one of convenor, sponsor and co-producer of the work. Executive Branch functions might include:

- Children's cabinet
- Children's Report Card
- Children's Budget
- Production of state and local indicator data for use in planning
- "Turn the curve" teams for a given result or indicator
- Development and use of performance measures for management and budgeting

(5) The legislative branch most often plays the role of authorizing and reviewing the work. Legislative branch functions might include:

- Authorize the creation of state and local children's collaboratives
- Hold results budget hearings
- Authorize/require the creation of a children's report card, children's budget and cost of bad results analysis
- Independent analysis of the Executive branch children's budget
- Use performance measures in budget review

See also: "[11 Things a Legislature could consider to advance results accountability.](#)"

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

1.11 How do we do this if the levels above us (e.g. federal, state, county, city) don't care and won't help?

The Short Answer

- 1. Don't allow this to be an excuse. The work can proceed in parallel. The states shouldn't wait for the federal government. Counties shouldn't wait for the state. Cities shouldn't wait for the counties. And communities shouldn't wait for any of the above.**

- 2. Don't give up on such help, but work to gain it in a politically smart way.**

- 3. And be creative about financing your what works strategy, so that you are not solely dependent on grants from above.**

Full Answer

- (1) While it would be best if all levels of government were in alignment, it is not necessary. (See the [Matter of Alignment](#).) The states shouldn't wait for the federal government. The counties shouldn't wait for the state. The cities shouldn't wait for the counties. The communities shouldn't wait for any of the above.**

- (2) Don't let this be an excuse for inaction. Lack of support from "above" is often given as the reason for not taking action. The work on results at these different levels is parallel work. And it is possible for any one of them to make progress at improving conditions of well-being without the others. Tillamook county made progress on teen pregnancy without any new resources from the state in the first two years of its effort (See the [Tillamook County](#) case example). Many communities are making progress through community development corporations without any explicit government support. (See the New Development Corporation from Newark, New Jersey!)**

- (3) As you have your "what works" discussion, make a point to include actions which potential partners in other levels, both public and private, could contribute. For example, you may want to use child care funding more flexibly to help victims of domestic violence gain work and**

Tools
1. The Cosmology of Financing in Anwer 2.14
Stories
1. Tillamook County turns the curve on teen pregnancy without new money in the first two years. 2. The Matter of Alignment
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
1. The Center for the Study of Social Policy has done extensive work on this challenge under the rubric of "governance." See the CSSP website
References

independence - and the waiver of a state regulation would help access the money. Include these and other potential partner actions and then pursue them as part of your action plan and, if they are important, go after them in a politically smart way. But do not create an action plan which solely depends for its success on the actions of others. It is almost always possible to make great progress without the support of other levels of government, and often progress is made in spite of deliberate opposition.

(4) Data is an important area where one level of work (e.g. state) can help another (e.g. county). See the discussion under 2.8 [Where do we get the data for indicators? How do we get better data?](#) on how to work to get better data even in an uncooperative environment.

(5) And of course financing is an area where help from above can be important. See 2.14 [How do we finance a results-based plan?](#) for a systematic way of thinking about financing that goes beyond dependence on grants from above.

1.12 How do we keep this simple? (Or What do we do when things go off track?)

The Short Answer

- 1. Always go back to results, common ground end conditions of well-being that people care about. When people are clear about the ends, it clarifies the conflicts about means. There is not one right answer. Everyone can contribute.
2. Return to the simple questions that drive this work: What do we want (in plain language)? How would we recognized it in measurable terms? How are we doing on those measures? Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better? What works to do better? What do we propose to actually do?

Full Answer

- (1) Always go back to results, common ground. If you get off tract, and there are countless ways to do this, take people back to their common ground, a commitment to the results for children and families. When people are clear about the ends, it clarifies the conflicts about means. This is not about the one and only right strategy, program, etc. It-s about how these can contribute to the results...
(2) Imagine a place where we had a good report card on children and families. The report card showed the results we want for children and families and set out indicators that gave us a good picture of whether we were getting these results or not. Now what would we do if we wanted to make the numbers better? What would we do if we wanted to make just one number better? This is the idea behind results accountability. What would we do? What would each of us do differently in our individual jobs? What would we do differently collectively.
(3) In effect, results accountability is a way of "calling the question" on our rhetoric about children and families. It says, "OK, you want all children to be safe and healthy. How could we tell if children were safe and healthy in (objective) measurable terms? How are we doing on those

Tools
1. Talk to Action Schematic
2. The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability
3. The Language of Accountability
4. The 5 minute version of results and performance accountability
Stories
Tips
1. Drive out the use of jargon.
2. Be disciplined about language usage.
3. Welcome in new people and new ideas about what works.
4. Passion and discipline - the ingredients of successful change.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

measures? What would it take to do better?" These questions are more than they seem. They require that we pursue making a difference that actually shows up *at the population level*. This means that we can not fool ourselves by taking a collection of actions that sound good and hoping for the best.

Results accountability means that we have set out to make a change, not by chance, but by choice. And the deliberate nature of this work is different. And it requires a different way of thinking about and organizing the work. We must make the best choices possible for indicators. We must strive to get better indicators over time. We must recognize that baselines are the only real business like way to measure change for the better or worse. We must work to understand why the baselines look the way they do, so that we can target our efforts most effectively. We must bring in many partners, public and private, parents and youth, to contribute their wisdom and where possible their resources.

We must struggle to find the things that actually work to make change at the population level. This means we must search for things that have worked in other places and search deep in ourselves and our community for things we think will work here. We must not accept the easy or politically correct answers, but test everything by whether it will make a difference here. And we must get started on action. We must take those steps that can be take easily and inexpensively first, and gather resources to take the harder and more expensive actions as soon as we can. We must track our progress and be honest with ourselves about whether we are in fact making a difference. We must make changes and improvements to our plan over time. And if we do all this well, we must celebrate and share credit. And then get back to doing more...

(4) In essence, results accountability asks us to answer the question: "What if we were really serious about this? (children safe, healthy ready for school etc.) What if this wasn't just rhetoric. What if this were a life or death matter that required us to pull out all the stops, and do whatever was necessary. What if lives hung in the balance and time was of the essence? What would we do differently? What would I do differently?"

This way of thinking may help explain the ideas, may help motivate people, may help keep the work simple enough to be successful.

1.13 How long should all of this take?

The Short Answer

One hour and 15 minutes.

Full Answer

Some of the answer depends on who is doing the work, the partners at the table, and whether there are paid staff devoted to the tasks.

What is reasonable to expect in the first year? If you have a pre-existing collaborative or coalition from which to work, and some dedicated staff, it would be possible to start the process on establishing results and have a good working set of indicators by the end of the first year. It would be possible for the work to begin on developing a report card which might be published in the second year of work. A turn the curve table could be set to work on one indicator using the disciplined process described in xxx (see also Prop 10 paper), with regular reports to an elected body. It would be possible to bring new partners into the coalition, either to the turn the curve effort or the general group or both. The work might be endorsed or authorized by executive and/or legislative branches.

In year two it should be possible to have a politically grounded set of results and indicators and a first report card. The turn the curve group should be able to show some initial accomplishments (actions implemented) and a regular disciplined process for tracking progress and adding to the set of partners and set of actions. The process might begin on developing a table or set of tables for other results or indicators where people can come together and track the indicator and develop strategies.

In years three to five it should be possible to develop a first generation children’s budget. It should be possible to hold one or more results hearings in the legislative branch (eg. A hearing

<p>Tools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stopwatch 2. Cattle prod 3. Book of Prayers 4. What’s Next: A Basic Action Plan to pursue results and performance accountability 5. A Strategy Map for Results Based Budgeting
<p>Stories</p>
<p>Tips</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The work runs on parallel tracks and is not linear. 2. This is a multi-year effort. Don’t expect to get it perfect in one year. 3. Get from talk to action as soon as possible and buy yourself some time and credibility.
<p>Advice from:</p>
<p>Organizational Resources</p>
<p>References</p>

on children ready for school – see Maryland) And begin to use report card and children’s budget data in the budget development and review process. The first turn the curve tables should be showing some measurable deviation from the baseline. And the data development agenda should be producing new, more accurate and more timely data on child and family well-being.

[Hit Counter]

2.1 What are the basic ideas of results-based decision making and budgeting?

The Short Answer

- 1. Start with ends and work backward to means.
- 2. Use data to drive decisions, not just measure success or failure after the fact.
- 3. Results are desired conditions of well-being, the ends we want, for children, adults families and communities
- 4. Improving results means getting from talk to action. And getting from talk to action means following a disciplined thinking process:

Results: What conditions of well-being (results) do we want for children, adults families and communities, stated in plain language?

Experience: How do we experience these results in our everyday lives?

Indicators: How could we recognize these conditions in measurable terms?

Baselines: Where have we been and where are we headed on the indicators?

Story behind the Baselines: Why do these the indicator baselines look the way they do? What are the causes?

Partners: Who are the potential partners who have a role to play in doing better?

What works strategy: What works? What do we think it will take to do better?

Action Plan and Budget: What do we propose to actually do?

Tools

- 1. [Talk to Action Thinking Process Schematic](#)
- 2. [Results Accountability: What is it? Why do it? "one pager"](#)
- 3. [Turn the Curve Exercise](#)
- 4. [Exercise One Page Instructions](#)
- 5. [The Whole Distance from Results to What Works. Exercise](#)
- 6. [Story Analysis Exercise](#)

Stories

Tips

- 1. Start with the plain language results that people agree are important.
- 2. Explain the results thinking process like a business, and results are the equivalent of profit.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

Full Answer

Results based decision-making starts with the end conditions of well-being (results) we want for children, adults families and communities, and works backward to the means to get there. There is in fact a simple progression of thought at the heart of this process:

- (1) What do we want?
- (2) How will we recognize it?
- (3) What will it take to get there?

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Population: Results accountability starts with a whole population. This can be all children in a state, county or city; all elders in a state, county or city. Or it can be a population in a smaller geographic area (all children in the Fairfield neighborhood). Or it can be a subpopulation (e.g. all children 0 to 5; or all disabled children in the county). (Note Prop 10 population is all children, prenatal to age 5 who live in the county. It also includes, by extension, all the families in which these children live, or are about to be born. This is important because many of the things which will work to improve the health and school readiness of children involve helping their families, and in particular, their parents, be successful. So Prop 10 is about the well-being of the population of all children *and their families.*)

Results: Results are conditions of well-being we would like to say exist for this population. These conditions are stated in plain English (plain Spanish, plain Vietnamese, plain Farsi...) not bureaucratic jargon. Examples of results statements include: “all children born healthy; all children healthy and ready for school (Prop 10); all children succeeding in school; all youth making smart choices; all youth becoming happy productive contributing adults; stable and self sufficient families; self sufficient elders living in setting of their own choice.” There are many possible results statements for any given population. (The Prop 10 legislation includes the results: Achildren enter school in good health, ready and able to learn, and emotionally well developed.^[1] This is a statement that the public can understand, that can be used to communicate the basic purpose of Prop 10 and anchor this work. There are of course many other results for children and families which are important, e.g. all children safe, all children succeeding in school, strong and self sufficient families. Prop10, if successful, will also make a contribution to these other results.)

HOW WOULD WE RECOGNIZE IT?

The next two questions have to do with how we would recognize these conditions if we fell over them, first in terms of experience and then in terms of data.

Experience: How would we recognize these results in our day to day lives in the community? What would we see, hear, feel, observe? e.g. We would see children playing outside. We would hear young children with good communication skills. We would feel that children were respected and loved in our community. _

Indicators: How would we recognize these conditions in measurable terms. Here we are looking

for pieces of data that tell us whether these conditions exist or not. If the condition is child health, we might look at the rate of low birth-weight babies, or the rate of emergency room accidents. If the result is children succeeding in school we might look at the percent of children reading at grade level or graduating from high school. Some of this data we currently have and can use today in the planning process. Other data, which we would like to have, becomes part of our data development agenda.

Baselines: For each indicator, we present a picture of where we've been and where we're headed if we stay on our current course. These pictures are called baselines. They allow us to define success as doing better than the baseline.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO GET THERE?

Story behind the baselines: Why do these baseline pictures look the way they do? What are the causes and forces at work? This is the epidemiology part of the work. Digging behind the pictures helps us get a handle on what's going on in our community and what might work to do better. As we do this work we bump up against things we wish we knew more about. This becomes part of our information/research agenda. We'll gather this information as best we can between meetings.

Partners: Who are the potential partners (people and agencies, public and private) who have a role to play in doing better?

What works: What do we *think* would work? *What would it take* to do better than the baselines in *this* community? What has worked in other places outside our community? What does the research tell us? Just importantly, what does our own personal experience tell us about what would work here? The answers should draw on the possible contributions of partners; and should involve no-cost and low-cost ideas.

Criteria: If we come up with a long list of things that might work, how do we choose what to actually do? What criteria should guide this selection process? Some criteria to think about include: *specificity* (Is the idea about specific action not rhetoric?), *leverage* (Will it make a big or little difference?), *values* (Is it consistent with our personal and community values?), and *reach* (Is it feasible to do it this year, next year or 3 to 10 years?).

Action plan and budget: What do we propose to actually do? This should take the form of a multi-year action plan laying out what is to be accomplished by when (goals and objectives). We can then assign responsibilities and get started. Once you decide on things to be done, projects, programs, no-cost and low-cost actions etc. you can use performance measures to track their progress.

This does not have to take forever. You can take a pass at this thinking process in an hour or so. And then go through it again each time you get together. Every time you iterate this process, your action plan gets better.

The results accountability section of this paper is organized around this thinking process.

2.2

What is the difference between population well-being (results accountability) and client well-being (performance accountability) and why is it important?

The Short Answer

1. Results accountability is accountability for the well-being of a whole population. And population accountability is bigger than any one program or agency or one level of government. In fact, it's bigger than government. It requires the whole community, public and private partners to make a difference. ("It takes a community to turn a curve.")

2. Performance accountability is accountability for the performance of a program, agency or service system. The most important performance measures are about the well-being of a client population (i.e. those who receive service or otherwise benefit from the program.)

3. This distinction is important because it both explains and determines who is accountable for what. Managers are accountable for the performance of the programs, agencies and service systems they manage. They are not accountable for the well-being of whole populations. Population accountability lies with the whole community

Full Answer

(1) Population well-being is clearly beyond the responsibility of any one organization or any one level of government. It is, in fact, beyond government itself. People can see this distinction clearly when an example is used.

..... **TECHNIQUE:** Help a group see how population accountability is beyond any one agency, organization or government itself: Ask the group to name the potential partners who have a role to play in "All Children Being Healthy." (Or choose another result about children and families or for the entire population like "Clean Environment" or "Prosperous Economy.") Ask the group if any one of these partners can or should be held responsible for the result. Note that, in the case of "healthy children," it is common

Tools

1. [Technique to help a group understand the difference between population and program accountability](#)
2. [An advanced view of the relationship between indicators and performance measures](#)
3. [Funders' Role in Results Accountability](#)

Stories

Tips

1. People have trouble with the idea that a single piece of data can play two roles (performance measure role: measuring the performance of a program and indicator role: a proxy for population well-being). Try the image of a famous actor playing two roles as a way to explain this.
2. These double roles are particularly important to those agencies (e.g. public health, education, and the environment) where programs often serve most or all of the population.
3. In prevention programs, some lower right quadrant measures will be indicators of the prevalence of the condition to be prevented in the general population.

Advice from:

for this responsibility to be pinned on just one department, the Health Department. Now that we have a fuller list of partners we can see that this is not right. The Health Department should, perhaps, take the lead in convening the partners (around a table), and organizing the process, but can not assume full responsibility.

Organizational Resources

References

(2) Programs and agencies serve client and customer groups that are (almost always) less than the total population. It is possible to identify agency and program managers who can be held formally responsible for the performance of that program or agency.

Chart:
[Advanced View of the Relationship between Indicators and Performance Measures](#)

.....(3) Advanced view of the relationship between indicators and performance measures: When a program or agency is small, it is not hard to distinguish the client population from the total population. But there are some times when a program (or agency's) clients are close to or the same as the total population. As a program's client population approaches the total population (of the state, county, city or community), program performance measures begin to play a double role. First they are measures of how well the program is performing. An they can be used as indicators, proxies for the well-being of the whole population.

EXAMPLE 1: This most often happens in education and public health. The school superintendent and her senior staff go off on a retreat. The group discusses performance measures for the school district as an organizational entity that they are responsible for running. One of the most important performance measures is "high school graduation rate." The next day the superintendent goes down the street to the monthly meeting of the family and children's collaborative. Here, one of the population results the group has established is "all children succeeding in school," and one of the indicators is "high school graduation rate." The data for the graduation rate is playing two different roles, first as a management performance measure, and second as a proxy for the well-being of all school age children.

Note that the data element "graduation rate" is playing two different ROLES. This is like an actor playing two different parts; same actor, but one day Hamlet and the next day Lear. So graduation rate is one day a performance measure and the next day an indicator. This not mean that performance measures are sometimes indicators, anymore than it means that Hamlet is sometimes Lear. The constant is the data. The roles are different.

EXAMPLE 2: The Public Health Department is operating a campaign to improve childhood immunizations. The campaign can be seen as a program to be managed. And as such it has performance measures. Such performance measures might include the unit cost of the vaccines or the accessibility of the service as measured by percentage of staff hours in mobile vans vs. clinics (upper right quadrant measures). Client or customer well-being can be measured (in the lower quadrants) by the number of children immunized and the percentage this represents of the total population. But it can also be measured by the percentage of total population that is immunized or the childhood disease rate for immunizable illnesses. These are total population measures which usually serve as indicators. Here they are also

used in the role of performance measure for the initiative.

(4) This double role of data helps explain why these ideas have been so mixed up together over the years. It has been quite common in past (and unfortunately many current) performance measurement efforts to hold agencies responsible for indicators. If it's "safe community" then it must be the police department. If it's "healthy children," then it must be the health department. And so forth. This has led to considerable, and well justified, cynicism about performance measures. Because the heads of these agencies can easily see that they are one of many players who must work together to do better. And yet the performance accountability system pins it on them alone. One way to deal with this in agency presentations (to the public or the legislative branch) is as follows:

Make sure every presentation has two parts: Part 1 displays the community-wide results and indicators the agency is trying to impact as part of a broad partnership. Part 2 displays the specific performance measures for the agency and its component parts.

[See the format for a Results-based Budget: Volume I and II](#)

EXAMPLE 3: The Health Department Director's budget testimony: "We are here today to present the budget of the Health Department for the next fiscal year. On page one you can see at the top of the page the most important indicators of the health of our citizens in this (state, county, city). The Health Department is part of a health coalition addressing these indicators. This coalition includes the hospitals, doctors, nurses, managed care organizations, as well as schools, teachers and parents. Here's what we as a coalition will be doing in the next year to turn the curve on the indicators you see before you. And here is the Health Department's role in that effort. Some of these actions require your approval in the budget for the Department. The actions of other partners is contributed and paid for by those partners. On the lower portion of the page you can see a summary of the Department and its component divisions. Presented for each are 2 or 3 of the most important performance measures. These tell you whether that particular part of the organization is working well. We use these measures, and many others, to manage the department and work to provide the very best possible service. When we get to the budget for each division, we will show you the baselines for each of these measures, and what we propose to do to improve performance."

The very structure of this presentation separates population accountability from agency and program performance accountability. This two part structure can be used in everything from press releases to the annual report. It helps keep the department's role clear. And it helps policy makers see that if they really want to make progress on population indicators (like immunization rates, high school graduation rates, juvenile crime rates, poverty rates, etc. it will take the actions of many partners, a significant, not token, investment.

(5) Another place where the boundary between performance measures and indicators is important is discussion of service "systems." Service systems involve many different agencies and service providers. The important thing to remember here is that these systems provide service and have clients or customers. In other words it is possible to distinguish people in the system receiving service from those outside the system not receiving service. This means that the measures for the service system performance are performance measures. So for example, take the entire child welfare system

the rate of repeat child abuse and child neglect (that is children who come back through the system a second time) is a performance measure for the system. This is distinct from the actual population rate of child abuse and repeat child abuse, which in theory can only be gathered from population surveys and studies. Again, services system performance measurement data will often play a double role as indicators.

(6) **Prevention programs:** prevention programs by their nature attempt to influence the behavior or condition of an entire population before they have need to enter the formal service system. In effect their client population is an entire population. In this case client results and population results are the same thing. So prevention programs must be judged on measures which are most often used only as indicators. It is also possible to measure the effects of prevention on the much smaller group of those people “contacted” by the prevention program (e.g. those children who attended a traveling theater production on violence prevention.) This kind of measure then cleanly follows the rules for performance measures. Prevention programs should have both kinds of measures.

(7) **Grantmaking:** Grantmakers must view their grantmaking agenda as fitting into a larger strategy. Just as no program or agency can, by itself, turn the curve on an indicator, so too, no grant agenda can. If grantmakers wish to make a contribution to population well-being, they must articulate what they think would be necessary and how their funding fits within this strategy. See the chart on the [Funder role in population change](#).

2.3 How do we get people to understand the difference between indicators and performance measures?

The Short Answer

Indicators are about <u>whole</u> populations.	Performance measures are about <u>client</u> populations.
Indicators are usually about peoples’ lives, whether or not they receive any service.	Performance measures are usually about people who receive service.
Indicators are proxies for the well-being of whole populations, and necessarily matters of approximation and compromise.	Performance measures are about a known group of people who get service and conditions for this group can often be accurately measured.

Full Answer

See the answer to 2.2: What is the difference between population well-being (results accountability) and client well-being (performance accountability)?

- (1) Much of this answer to this question is addressed in the answer to 2.2. Please read this first
- (2) Why is this important? We have a long history of holding individual agencies responsible for population well-being. No one agency, by itself can turn the curve on any indicator. It is unfair and unproductive to hold a single agency responsible. We need to reframe the way we talk about

accountability for whole population results and indicators. Rather than say: “The Health Department is responsible for "all children being healthy.” We need to say “The Health department is responsible for assembling a team of public and private partners and creating a community strategy to make all children healthy.” The difference here is not just phrasing. It is the difference between having one agency to blame when things go wrong and accepting joint responsibility. It is the difference between expecting the Health Department to do it all by itself,

Tools

- 1. [Advanced view of the relationship between Performance Measures and Indicators](#)
- 2. [Summary: The Difference between the Role of Indicators and the Role of Performance Measures](#)
- 3. [Separating the Wheat from the Chaff: Types of Performance Measures found in each Quadrant](#)
- 4. [Administrative Unit Performance Measures](#)
- 5. [Performance Measure Examples for Programs and Services](#)

Stories

- 1. [San Mateo County's Outcome-Based Management System Aligns Program Performance Measures, Count Budget and Community Result](#)

Tips

- 1. People have trouble with the [idea that a single piece of data can play two roles](#) (performance measure role: measuring the performance of a program and indicator role: a proxy for population well-being). Try the image of a famous actor playing two roles as a way to explain th
- 2. These double roles are particularly important to those agencies (e.g. public health, education, and the environment where programs often serve m

and recognizing that this is not possible, that the contribution of many partners will be required.

See the Language of Accountability

(3) The disciplined distinction between indicators and performance measures is a new idea for many people. They are used to using the word “indicator”

interchangeably to describe population and program measures. Using language discipline to distinguish them, indicators are measures which help quantify the achievement of a result. Performance measures are measures of how well public and private programs and agencies are working.

or all of the population.
3. In prevention programs, some lower right quadrant measures will be indicators of the prevalence of the condition to be prevented in the general population.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

(4) Here are some differences:

The Difference between the Role of Indicators and the Role of Performance Measures

Indicators are about whole populations.

Indicators are usually about peoples' lives, whether or not they receive any service.

Indicators are proxies for the well-being of whole populations, and necessarily matters of approximation and compromise.

Performance measures are about client populations.

Performance measures are usually about people who receive service.

Performance measures are about a known group of people who get service and conditions for this group can often be accurately measured.

2.4 What are some populations for which results can be developed and used?

The Short Answer

1. Populations and subpopulations can be defined by geography or by both characteristic and geography.
2. Examples of populations include: all children in the county, all children 0 to 5 in the county, all children 0 to 5 in the Fairfield neighborhood of the county; all elders in the state, all elders in the state with incomes below the poverty level, all citizens in the city, all citizens with disabilities in the city.

Full Answer

[View Populations and Subpopulations Chart](#)

(1) Populations can be defined by geography or by both characteristic and geography.

Geography Example: all children in the county, all elders in the state, all citizens in the community

Characteristic and Geography Example: all school age children with disabilities in the county, all frail elders over age 85 in the state, all families with children in the community

(2) We are familiar with geographic subpopulations. States are geographic subpopulations of the entire country. Counties are subpopulations of states. Cities and communities are subpopulations of counties.

(3) Subpopulations by characteristic are also commonly understood. For example, the children’s collaborative might consider the well-being of all children and families in the community. Another group might consider the well-being of all children from a particular

Tools
1. <u>Identifying Populations and Subpopulations</u>
Stories
1. <u>Santa Cruz County's united effort turns the curve on teen alcohol use: Together for Youth / Unidos Para Nuestros Jovenes.</u>
2. <u>Tillamook County turns the curve on the teen pregnancy rate.</u>
Tips
1. Any population or subpopulation is OK as long as it is not a service population (i.e. all people in that population receive service from a single program or agency)
2. In those rare cases where a service population is the total population, see 2.3 <u>How do we get people to understand the difference between indicators and performance measures?</u>
3. There are important subpopulations (e.g. disabled children, or ethnic subpopulations) where it will often be necessary to use results accountability in addition to work at the total population level.
Advice from:
Organizational

ethnic or cultural group, or all children 0 to 5, or all children with disabilities. These are subpopulations. And the entire thinking process outlined above can be applied to these populations as well.

For example we could put the population “All Hispanic Children” at the top of the page, articulate the results we want for these children, how we would experience these results, identify indicators, create baselines, develop the story behind the baselines and ask who are the partners and what works to turn the curve to do better.

Resources
References

(4) The principle difficulty with results accountability for subpopulations is data. As the group gets smaller and smaller it is harder to get reliable timely data to use as indicators. This means that the process can follow the pathway where experience and the data development agenda serve as proxies for indicators. ([See 1.4 Where do I start?](#))

(5) A unique and important population to consider in this work is the TOTAL population of a state, county, city or community. Much of this guide is about the populations of children and families with children. But these same principles can be applied to the total population. And in fact, this is the basis for the quality of life community well-being report cards that are being produced across the country. Some of the best work here is in Oregon (The Oregon Benchmarks), and Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz County California. See [Case Studies.](#))

2.5 How do we select results for a given population?

The Short Answer

- 1. Results are plain language conditions of well-being for children, adults, families and communities.
- 2. Choosing results is a political process more than a technical process. You are looking for a set of statements which are understandable to the public, say something important about the well-being of a given population, and which are reasonably complete.
- 3. Create a process which has a highly respected steering committee, is well staffed and has lots of room for broad participation. Make sure the development process is kept on track with a clear and coherent framework.

Full Answer

- (1) Choosing results is a political process, and it is important to recognize that at the beginning. So we will discuss approaches to organizing the political process and then the technical process of selecting results.
- (2) Political process: The most successful processes for selecting results seem to have the following components:
 - (a) A highly respected steering committee made up of public and private sector representatives. For example the Georgia Family and Children’s Policy Council has prominent business leaders, faith community leaders, and high level legislative and executive branch representatives. (GEORGIA, SEE ALSO MISSOURI FIT, OREGON PROGRESS BOARD ETC.)
 - (b) A framework: It is essential that the group adopt a

Tools

- 1. [Technique: Generating a Results List from scratch](#)
- 2. [Anywhere leads to Everywhere: Con Hogan's chart that helps people understand the interconnected nature of results](#)

Stories

- 1. [San Mateo County's Children's Summit Moves 350 Participants from Talk to Action.](#)
- 2. [The Santa Cruz county-wide data book is a powerful tool for community change.](#)
- 3. [Missouri and Vermont: Building Senior Leadership Support for Results and Performance Accountability: A Dialogue Between Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan](#)

Tips

- 1. Any condition of well-being that can be stated in plain language is a result.
- 2. Try to build consensus on a list of results. There is no right or wrong list

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

conceptual framework for the work to keep it coherent and disciplined. (The RPA framework presented here has served this purpose in many states and counties.)

References

- (c) **Staff.** If you pick the right people for the steering group they will not have time to do much of this work. You will need one or more staff people to do the research, staff the meetings and make recommendations.
- (d) **The steering committee and staff** take the time necessary to get their act together and develop a version of results and indicators that they think is pretty good. This will take some back and forth between commissioners and staff. While this process should not be closed to the public, it should allow for plenty of give and take. The product should be something that could stand as the final best thinking of the group. This product is then offered as a starting point for discussion in the next phase.
- (e) **Broad participation.** The best processes used many different ways to obtain local input including hearings, focus groups, as well as paper and electronic distribution methods.

(3) There is a debate that often takes place about whether it is necessary or desirable to gather public input BEFORE the steering group develops its recommendations. There is not a right or wrong answer to this question. But agreement on a framework is absolutely essential before broad based input is sought. In other words, the steering committee and staff must have a structured way to hear, to organize and to interpret what people offer as recommendations. In one state where this was not done, the public input process generated recommendations for all the steps in the RPA thinking process (results, indicators, story behind the baselines, what works etc.). It is exactly what you would expect from that kind of process. The group did not have a clear method for sorting the difference between indicators and what works ideas and performance measures etc. and the consequent product was a hodge podge of many different (non-parallel) components. It made the subsequent work difficult and confusing and the process was ultimately abandoned.

(5) **Technical How to:** Here is an exercise which works with groups to develop results for a population starting from a blank slate. An important thing to remember is that different groups will produce different lists of results (or anything else). You can run this exercise once with a single group and then use the product (with refinements) as part of an external review process. Or you could run this exercise with many groups and craft their many products into something that represents common ground.

.....TECHNIQUE for Generating Results List from Scratch

Purpose: Create a list of 10 plain language results.

Pre-requirements: all participants must have been trained or instructed so they have at least a basic understanding of the difference between results

indicators and performance measures. Preferably all participants will have training in the full results-based decision making process.

Step 1. Ask participants in the whole group to brainstorm endings to the sentences:

We want children who are...

We want families that are...

We want to live in a community that is...

Step 2. Break into three groups (by children, family and community) Have each group pare their list of answers down to 5 for children, 3 for families, and 2 for the community. (Option: have each group designate “emissaries “ to the other two groups to discuss potential duplication and overlap and other issues necessary for the work of the groups to fit together.)

Step 3. Bring the large group back together and have each group report. Have the large group make recommendations for changes that will make the list function as a whole.

Variations:

We want adults/elders who are...

We want an environment which is...

We want an economy that is...

**Taken from FPSI Training
for Trainers and coaches,
June, 2000**

(6) We are now accustomed to the idea of results for children and families. But the idea applies to almost any condition of well-being you can imagine. For example here are some "non-conventional" results:

Community with adequate affordable housing for all

Community with adequate sustainable water supply (LA, Santa Fe)

Forrests not prone to fire (pick any western state)

Communities without graffiti

(7) An important pitfall: Starting on one result without a complete list of results creates the tendency to load everything onto that one result because it is the only game in town. So if "healthy children" is picked as the only result the collaborative has identified to work on, then every part of the well-being of children can be made subordinate to health. So, for example, family self sufficiency is part of health because families with higher incomes have better nutrition and

better access to medical care etc. The next month a task force on family self sufficiency concludes that health is subordinate to self sufficiency because in order to be self sufficient families must be healthy etc. This is in fact just another version of the old game where the whole world is seen through the eyes of just one agency or one profession. It is probably better to develop at least a complete working list of results before choosing which ones to work on.

(8) A word about the relationship of state and local development of results and indicators: The wrong way to do this is to develop a set of results and indicators at the state level and then impose them on local folks. There is a legitimate state interest in having a core set of results and indicators which allow different parts of the state to be compared. But this does not mean a monolithic top down process. There are two solutions that have been used in other states that seem to work well. In Georgia, the state has developed a set of core results and benchmarks and then allowed local Family Connection Councils to add to this list. In Oregon, the goals and (approximately 92) benchmarks provide a thorough picture of quality of life, counties, cities and communities can choose which of these to adopt for local use. Multnomah county, for example has identified a subset which it calls "urgent" benchmarks. Whatever approach you decide to take, make sure it is respectful of the legitimate differences which exist between local conditions, values and priorities.

(9) Product: The results list can be presented in many different forms. In a number of states (notably Vermont, Missouri and Georgia) , the results or outcomes list is a well-known communication tool all by itself. The most usual format for presentation of results and indicators is a report card on the well-being of children and families. See 2.10 [How do we create a report card and what do we do with it? \(on child and family well-being, for other populations, for an entire community quality of life\)](#)

2.6 How do we identify results in terms of everyday experience?

The Short Answer

1. Ask people how they experience the results (e.g. healthy and safe children) in their every day lives. What do we see, hear, feel? For example, for safe children, we might observe children wearing bike helmets.

2. Experience" is the bridge between plain language results and indicators. Each experience is a pointer to a potential indicator. Observing bike helmets might be a pointer to bike accident rates with head injury or rates of unintended injury for children and youth.

Full Answer

(1) The principle function of developing or articulating an experiential version of a result is as a set of pointers to potential indicators. So ask the group, “How would you experience healthy children in your day to day lives? What would you see hear feel observe as you walked around the community?”

(2) Identifying experience is a first step in identifying indicators, but it has a value above and beyond this function.

(a) Experience of a result is another way to ground the result (and the idea of results) in everyday experience. It is another way to connect with the partners who are parents, youth, businesspeople, faith community members and others who are put off by jargon and exclusionary language.

(b) Experiential versions of a result can actually be used to steer the planning process in the absense of good data, or while data is being developed. (LINK TO PATHWAYS DISCUSSION)

(3) TECHNIQUE: Brainstorm a list of experiences for each indicator. As you do this, it is quite common for members of the group to offer up ideas that come later in the framework. Most common among these are actual indicators themselves or what works ideas. For example if you are leading a process to generate a list of experiences for “Children Ready for school” you might

Tools
<p>1. Experience list for children healthy and ready for school 2. Exercise: The Whole Distance from Results to What Works</p>
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

get:

I would see children playing well on the playground (experience)

The young children I meet would know their ABC's (experience)

The percent of children promoted from kindergarten to first grade (indicator)

Every child who needs child care would get it. (what works strategy)

It is important for the leader of this process to be able to identify when the suggested item is off task. But it is also important to deal with this in a respectful way that helps reinforce peoples knowledge of the thinking process (“That’s a great idea, but it’s a suggestion about what works and we’ll get to that in this part of the process – refer to the schematic). It is also important not to lose the idea. One way to do this is to have blank flipchart paper on the wall for indicators, story behind the curve, partners, and what works, so that ideas that come up at any time during the work session can be captured in the right place.

See [the attached examples of how we experience children healthy and ready for school.](#)

2.7 How do we select indicators for a result?

The Short Answer

- 1. Start by assessing the result in terms of everyday experience, what we see hear, or feel about children ready for school or stable families.
- 2. Brainstorm a list of candidate indicators. Each entry is a data statement, e.g. % of children reading at grade level, rate of foster children per 100,000.
- 3. Assess each entry on the basis of communication power (do people understand it) proxy power (does it represent the result) and data power (do you have quality data on a timely basis).
- 4. Develop a three part list: the 3 or 4 headline indicators you could use in the public square, the secondary indicators you will use for the story behind the curve and other behind the scenes work, and a data development agenda so you can get better data in the future.

Full Answer

(1) Indicators (or benchmarks) are measures which help quantify the achievement of a result. They answer the question "How would we recognize these results in measurable terms if we fell over them?" So, for example, the rate of low-birthweight babies helps quantify whether we're getting healthy births or not. Third grade reading scores help quantify whether children are succeeding in school today, and whether they were ready for school three years ago. The crime rate helps quantify whether we are living in safe communities, etc.

(2) All indicators and performance measures take two forms: a lay definition and a technical definition. The lay definition (e.g. teen pregnancy rate) should rate high on communication power, something that laypersons can understand. The technical definition describes exactly how the data element is constructed and where the

Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indicator Selection Worksheet 2. Indicator Selection Criteria 3. Links to Report Card Web sites
Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contra Costa County's Children's Report Card tracks state, county and neighborhood trends for 23 Indicators under 5 Results.
Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When rating indicators on the three criteria, listen to the dissenters; they often know something important that the rest of the group doesn't. 2. An indicator takes two forms : a lay definition that everyone can understand and a technical definition that describes exactly how it is calculated. 3. Don't create compound indicators that combine a measure and a target. Keep targets as a separate process.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

describes exactly how the data element is constructed and where the data comes from. For example: The teen pregnancy rate is the total number of births to teens, as reported by the largest hospitals in the county, divided by the total population of females age 12 to 17, calculated as the percent of such age group in the last census, multiplied time the current CPS estimate of total county population, adjusted for population growth.

It is actually important to reach agreement on both the lay and technical definitions of the indicator (or performance measure) in the selection process itself. This may require some help from a data expert, and may take some time to completely resolve. Get as far as you can in the first session without getting hung up, and then refine the definition in future meetings of the group. Here's why this is important:

Every time you change the technical construction of an indicator you create a new indicator! This new indicator must be considered (rated on CPD powers) against other choices. When talking about variations most of the discussion is about data power (Do we have it? Is it any good?) and proxy power (Does it represent what we want it to represent?). Take the example of "rate of domestic violence," the lay definition of an indicator usually used as a proxy for a result like "safe and stable families." When it comes to technical definition, there are a lot of choices, particularly for the numerator. Is this total of monthly incidences reported from police records, or from requests for help from domestic violence shelters and programs, or from a household survey of prevalence conducted by the local university, but produced only once? In some communities, police records are thought to be unreliable and to understate incidence. Shelter records undercount incidence because on those women who seek shelter are counted. Neither count is unduplicated. Either might still be a good proxy, provided that these problems are fully explained in the "story behind the curve," and figured in the interpretation of the data.

(3) The plain truth is that it is often hard to find good data about the well-being of children and families. Data for young children is particularly difficult. We often don't count things until children enter school. Data systems for young children lag behind data systems for all children, which lag behind data systems used by government which lag behind data systems used by business and the private sector. To compound the problem, what we count is usually things that have gone wrong: child abuse, child neglect, injury, death, hospitalizations etc. Very rarely do we count positive situations, characteristics or events.¹²

In spite of these problems, it is possible to find indicators for child and family well-being. It is important first to revisit the purpose of choosing indicators for a result. It is to help us know how we could recognize this desired condition of well-being, and how we can know if we are making progress. Without indicator data, we are left to argue about perceptions and anecdotes which come to our attention through the media or other sources. If we are to be business-like about improving the conditions of well-being for these children, then we must be business-like about using data to steer our decisions and assess our progress.

(3) Here is a step by step way of identifying indicators:

! Start by assessing experience: How do we *experience* children healthy and ready for school,

or children succeeding in school or stable and self sufficient families? Partners around the table can create a working list of *experiences* in a brainstorm session. It is possible to add to this list from consultation with community members, professionals, parents and the academic community. By experience, we mean, how do we see, hear, or feel the condition? What do we see on the street? What do we see in our everyday work and personal lives? Remember that different cultures and communities may experience health and school readiness in different ways.

There are two reasons for starting with experience. First, each experience is a pointer to a potential indicator. If we experience children absent from child care or kindergarten due to illness, we can possibly count absentee rates in child care or kindergarten. If we experience children playing safely on playgrounds, we can possibly count rates of playground injury for young children .

The second reason for starting with experience is that it grounds the work in the common sense view of every day citizens. Too often, planning processes are the province of professionals and providers who talk in esoteric and inaccessible ways. If this work is to take hold in the community and energize the community to take action, it is necessary to build and communicate the work in clear and common sense ways. This is not an argument against rigor and discipline. Quite the opposite. It is an argument to start the *disciplined* thinking process where our partners and our constituents are.

Finally, the way we experience results can be used to drive the thinking and planning process where indicator data is insufficient. We may have trouble finding good data to assess whether children are well nourished or have good motor skills at school entry. This does not mean that these conditions are unimportant. We can think together about *what works* to produce these conditions and use this thinking to fashion our action plan. See 2.9 [What do we do if we don't have any good data at all?](#)

! Develop a set of candidate indicators: The collaborative or working group should brainstorm a list of candidate indicators. In most cases, it should not be necessary to start from scratch. Many states and counties have developed a set of results and indicators and have published report cards presenting actual data on the indicators. There are a number of resources available to help which can be accessed on line. INSERT LINKS The Foundation Consortium has developed a guide to indicators in California.^[3] And communities may have unique resources in this area if, for example, they have commissioned surveys of families or youth.

Remember: It is important to include as many members of the community as possible in this thinking process. And be sure to tap the expertise of your partners in the academic community, some of whom have spent their whole careers thinking about these very questions.

A word about the notion of leading and lagging indicators. In economics, we have leading and lagging indicators of the health of the economy. Leading indicators are indicators which show a change of direction before the change appears in the general economy (e.g. orders for durable good). Lagging indicators reflect the change in the economy after it has happened (e.g. unemployment rates). When it comes to the well-being of young children (prenatal to age 5) much

of the data we have are lagging indicators. The percentage of 3rd graders reading at grade level is a *lagging* indicator of how ready those children were for school 3 or 4 years earlier. These are still valuable measures. And it is possible to gear the planning process around *What would it take to produce better 3rd grade reading scores four years from now?* Lagging indicators bring a healthy and useful perspective.

.....! **Choose the best of what=s available:** Given a set of candidate indicators, it is then possible to use criteria to select the best indicators to represent the result. Using the best of what=s available necessarily means that this will be about *approximation and compromise*. If we had a thousand measures, we could still not fully capture the health and readiness of young children. We use data to approximate these conditions and to stand as proxies for them. There are three criteria which can be used to identify the best measures:

Communication Power: Does the indicator communicate to a broad range of audiences? It is possible to think of this in terms of the *public square test*. If you had to stand in a public square and explain to your neighbors "what we mean, in *this* community, by children healthy and ready for school," what two or three pieces of data would you use? Obviously you could bring a thick report to the square and begin a long recitation, but the crowd would thin quickly. It is hard for people to listen to, absorb or understand more than a few pieces of data at time. They must be common sense, and compelling, not arcane and bureaucratic. Communication power means that the data must have clarity with diverse audiences.

Proxy Power: Does the indicator say something of central importance about the result? (Or is it peripheral?) Can this measure stand as a proxy for the plain English statement of well-being? What pieces of data really get at the heart of the matter?

Another simple truth about indicators is that they run in herds. If one indicator is going in the right direction, often others are as well. You do not need 20 indicators telling you the same thing. Pick the indicators which have the greatest proxy power, i.e. those which are most likely to match the direction of the other indicators in the herd

Data Power: Do we have quality data on a timely basis? We need data which is reliable and consistent. And we need timely data so we can see progress - or the lack thereof - on a regular and frequent basis. Problems with data availability, quality or timeliness can be addressed as part of the data development agenda

! **Identify primary and secondary indicators, and a data development agenda.** When you have assessed the candidate indicators using these criteria, you will have sorted indicators into three categories:

Primary indicators: those 3 or 4 most important measures which can be used as proxies in the public process for the result. You could use 20 or 40, but peoples= eyes would glaze over. We need a handful of measures to tell us how we=re doing at the highest level.

Secondary indicators: All the other data that's any good. We will use these measures in assessing the story behind the baselines, and in the ~~A~~behind the scenes@ planning work. We do not throw away good data. We need every bit of information we can get our hands on to do this work well.

A data development agenda: It is essential that we include investments in new and better data as an active part of our work. This means the creation of a data development agenda - a set of priorities of where we need to get better.

It is a judgement call about how much to spend on such an agenda. Spending for data or any other administrative function should be carefully balanced with spending which directly benefits children and their families. As a rule such spending should not exceed 5 to 10% of a budget. And data investments are only part of that amount. This means that other partners will have to make contributions to this effort. And it means that not all data has to be of the highest research quality. At this stage of our learning about how to use data to make decisions, it is OK to use sampling and other techniques to get usable information that may not meet strict academic research standards.^[6]

.....(4) **Do not create compound indicators:** When constructing indicators it is best if you do not combine indicators and targets. For example: Teen Pregnancies will decrease to no more than 5 per 1000 births. There are several reasons for this. First you do not want to change your indicator every time you change your target.. Second, you set yourself up for a very particular kind of damaging criticism. If you define the indicator in terms of a specific level of accomplishment or increase, then you will be often be asked "are you there yet?" You will be backed into reporting your status as failure if you are not yet at your defined target. Third you inadvertently communicate that a certain level of failure is OK. Our indicator is 90% high school graduation rate, suggests that it's OK if 10% do not graduate. Finally, it is important to set targets in relationship to a baseline for them to be believable. There are many ways to do this (LINK). But putting the target into the definition of the indicator itself makes this much more difficult. The baseline will change, the sense of what is possible will change, and targets should change accordingly.

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

2.8 Where do we get the data for indicators? How do we get better data?

The Short Answer

1. Look at what others have done. There are many websites with report cards and data sources that others have used. (See tools.)
2. Get your partners to help access what now is produced. Sometimes the best data on child and family well-being comes from the public health and education systems. State data centers are charged with helping businesses and people access census and other data. The state employment service produces data for the Bureau of Labor Statistics that you can use.
3. Get the owners of the data to produce special runs for you. This is particularly important for communities. The section below gives some tips on the politics of how to do this.
4. As a last resort, produce new data. Samples and surveys are OK. And, with some common sense, you don't have to be an expert to do this.

Full Answer

(1) There's good news and there's bad news. The good news is that we have made enormous progress in the last 20 years in developing and making accessible a wide range of data on the conditions of children and families. The bad news is we are still 30 to 50 years behind the private sector in the timeliness, accuracy and utility of our data systems.

[Connect to child and family report card websites which show indicator data and how others have solved the data problem.](#)

(2) Don't reinvent the wheel: The other good news is that many states and counties have now developed report cards on children and families and a trail has been blazed. The first thing to do in thinking about indicators and the availability of data is to look at what others have done. Resultsaccountability.com has a link to more than 10 of the best websites in the country with report card data on children and families, along with data

Tools
1. <u>Report Card Web sites, which show how others have solved the data problem</u>
Stories
1. <u>Contra Costa County's Children's Report Card tracks state, county and neighborhood trends for 23 Indicators under 5 Results.</u>
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

sources. In some cases, there are complete data sets available for a given state which allows a county to use these sources directly.

(3) Often, the best and most timely data on children and families comes from the education and public health systems. Public health systems have been using data for decades, and education systems are racing to become expert in the use of test score and other performance data to meet public demands for accountability. Other systems with relatively good data systems are child support enforcement, and workforce and labor programs.

(4) The state data center for the census is charged with helping people like you get the data you need from the census data base. You are not imposing on them. It's their job. They can run almost any census data at the census tract and maybe zip code level. And they can help you access data from other systems which with they work on a regular basis (like the current population survey and other labor market data sets.)

(5) Another great partner to have is the local community development corporation. These corporations are changing the face of many communities by producing dramatic improvements in economic results. They use data to drive their process and have access to many data systems in the economic, banking and labor market systems.

(6) If you have chosen an indicator for which data is not available in any of the 'standard' data sets, the process then becomes a hunt. It helps a lot to be successful if you have two things: a data person who knows the data systems of at least one of the major child serving agencies, and political standing that makes the data work important enough for agencies to cooperate. In some places, the collaborative has formed a data committee to help track down usable data.

.....(7) The problem of getting good data gets harder as you look at progressively smaller geographic areas. When you get to cities and in particular communities or neighborhoods it may be that there is very little good data available. You have four choices:

- Give up.
- Convince/pressure the holders of data to do special runs for your area.
- Do the work without data (See 2.9 [What do we do if we don't have any good data at all?](#))
- Create new data.

Let's skip number 1.

Convince/pressure the holders of data to do special runs for your area: Very often the problem is not that the data does not exist, but that it is part of a large computer system that has not been programmed to produce the data you need. This is particularly true of local data. Most state data systems include information which can locate client records down to the zip code, but it has never been a priority of the agency to produce local data.

In some cases, an enlightened state agency will act to produce this data because it is the right thing to do. There are good examples of this in Vermont and Missouri. In Vermont, the state Agency for Human Services and the State Department of Education worked together to produce comparable data at the school district level. This required significant effort on the part of AHS because its systems counted things only at the regional level. But AHS saw the power of supporting local outcome based planning and the use of data was critical to this work. The department has published since 1996 report cards on the well-being of children and families for all 59 school districts in the state. These report cards include both human services and education data.

But sometimes it takes some form of persuasion or outright pressure to get data from these systems. The starting point is understanding what to ask for, how to argue for it, and how to use the political process if reason fails.

What to ask for: The wrong thing to do is to ask for everything you have broken out for my area. It is important that you have thought about what you need and learned as much as you can about what's in the systems. You can figure out what you need in three ways.

First you can do the work of choosing primary and secondary indicators for your results, and a data development agenda. This tells you what you think are the most important measures of child and family well-being; and **Second you can look at what other states have produced** for their report cards or to support local planning efforts. While computer systems vary from state to state, the content of these systems is often very much the same. What one state has done, another state can likely do; and **Third you can look at the list of data elements in the agency data systems** to see what's there and if the data you want is part of the data base. This is not as hard as it sounds. All computer systems have descriptions of the data elements. These should be available under the freedom of information act if the agency otherwise refuses. Better, it is likely that your local department which administers or delivers services for a state agency has a very good idea of what data exists in that system.

How to argue for it: There are three principle arguments you can make in trying to convince an agency holder of the data to do something special to meet your data needs.

- **Two way street: We provide the data to you. You should make it available to us.** The truth is that most data in state systems is provide by local public and private service providers. But that data is then used to meet state needs but not local needs. The flow of data and information should be a two way street. "If we provide it to you, then you should help us access it."

- **It's in your self interest. Giving us the data will help you meet your goals:** There is a tremendous power in state local partnerships to produce improved results for children and families. State agencies that are smart will want to tap into that power for self interest reasons alone. For example, a state local partnership for stable families, might use foster care entry rate data as an indicator. A local effort to reduce foster care entry, while keeping kids safe, has a direct financial benefit to the state child welfare agency.
- **It doesn't cost much.** No matter what they say, it doesn't cost much to do this. It is a matter of priorities, not money. Most agencies have computer programmers on staff or under contract, and the agency has choices about how their time is used. It is rare that any new cash outlay will be required to produce this data. In most cases it will take one programmer, half to full time for 6 months to a year to do what you ask.

How to use the political process if reason fails: You probably already know how to do this. But the obvious levers are the elected officials for your jurisdiction and the media. Use them to push the agencies holding the data. One restraint is recommended. It is easy to vilify the recalcitrant agencies. But it is better if you can hold back from doing this. You will ultimately need these people as partners and you lose more than you gain if the process produces "enemies." Try hard to make it a win win solution.

Do the work without data: This should be seen as a temporary solution. Ultimately you will want to know how you are doing in concrete terms. The history of this work is to count "trying hard" as success - effort not effect. This is not, and never has been, good enough. But it is possible to do a version of results-based decision making and budgeting without data. This sounds like heresy. But here's how it could work: Instead of asking the question: "What works to turn the curve?" ask the questions "What works to produce the result?" "What works to produce the experience version of the result?" "What would work to impact the indicators on our data development agenda?" It may well be that these questions should be asked as part of the "regular" results process. But they can serve to give the look and feel of an "ends to means" process. And that is the essence of this work. For a more complete answer to this question see 2.9 [What do we do if we don't have any good data at all?](#)

Create new data: This is also not always as hard as it sounds. And the reason is that the data you create does not have to meet traditional standards for academic and scientific accuracy. This is heresy. But the truth is that the kind of planning and budgeting processes that we are talking about must ultimately be pragmatic. There is already great pragmatism in the question "What works?" There can be that same pragmatism in choosing indicator data to represent a result. Here are some specific examples:

- Many communities have done surveys of how safe people feel as a counterpart to the crime statistics. It is often true that people feel unsafe even when crime

statistics go down. These surveys can be implemented with volunteers. And if you can get the local college or university to help with the design so much the better. Other community surveys are possible if the data is important enough.

- **Go out and count: Sometimes it's as simple as a count of the number of vacant and abandoned houses in the community. So go count them every few months or so. Put these counts on a graph on the wall. Use this as a baseline to drive the results-based thinking process (What works to turn this curve?) Use it to engage partners and keep the process disciplined and on track.**
- **Be creative about how and what to count: If you are concerned about child safety, then ask at every meeting of the collaborative "How many people have seen a child riding a bike without a bike helmet since the last meeting?" Put this data on a chart on the wall. It can be that easy. A favorite story here:**

Senator Bernard Fowler of the Maryland Legislature grew up along the Chesapeake Bay and would catch crabs in the summer by wading out into the bay. As a boy he could still see his feet when the water was up to his chin. As he grew older the bay water became murkier, and he became a strong advocate for water quality. He decided that each year he would wade into the bay where he grew up until he lost sight of his sneakers. He recorded the distance as the Bernie Fowler Sneaker Test of water quality. At first this was considered strange behavior. But after a few years it became a media event with the Secretary of the Environment at his side. Create data, created attention, created will.

2.9 What do we do if we don't have any good data at all?

The Short Answer

1. Use the results and the experiential version of results to drive the process.

Instead of asking “How are we doing on the baseline?” we ask “How are we doing producing the result we want?” How prevalent are the experiences which tell us about this result?” “Are things getting better or worse?”

Instead of asking “What is the story behind the baseline?” we ask “What are the causes of our our current conditions on this result?”

Instead of asking “What works to turn the curve?” we ask “What will it take to do better on this result? What will it take to produce the experiences that best describe this result?”

2. Don't give up on the idea of using data to assess progress. See 2.8 [Where do we get the data for indicators? How do we get better data?](#)

Full Answer

(1) Don't give up on the idea of results-based decision making. The most important idea behind results based decision making is that we start with ends and work backwards to means. Data in the form of indicators is a method for being clear about ends. If ends can be described in measurable terms then there is less ambiguity about what progress looks like. And there can be more discipline to the business of getting there.

(2) Data is not the end-all and be-all of this work. You can have other ways of describing desired results or end conditions of well-being which can serve as proxies for data until data can be obtained and used.

(3) Here's how you can run the process without data. If you really have no indicator data and no

Tools
1. Exercise: The Whole Distance from Results to What Works
2. Story Analysis Exercise for Results Accountability
3. How to create working baselines to drive the what works thinking process.
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

prospect of getting any any time soon, then there are several things you can still do with the results accountability framework. It is possible to steer the thinking process with the results, experience and *desired* data at the top of the page. The planning process can then frame the questions not in terms of indicator baselines but in terms of these three elements.

Instead of asking “How are we doing on the baseline?” we ask “How are we doing producing the result we want?” How prevalent are the experiences which tell us about this result?” “Are things getting better or worse?”

Instead of asking “What is the story behind the baseline?” we ask “What are the causes of our our current conditions on this result?”

Instead of asking “What works to turn the curve?” we ask “What will it take to do better on this result? What will it take to produce the experiences that best describe this result?”

This is an admittedly weaker way to plan, because the definition of success becomes more clouded and less objective. But it is a way to get started while data is being improved.

(4) Don't give up on getting indicator data. See the answer to [2.8 Where do we get the data for indicators? How do we get better data?](#) for more details. Developing new data is not as daunting as it seems. This is because planning and budgeting data does not have to meet research quality standards. It is OK if it is credible and usable. So community groups can sponsor informal surveys of residents. Many communities have in fact done just this on the matter of safety, asking questions of whether residents “feel” safe. Often these numbers conflict with the crime statistics and this allows the community to go deeper on solutions that address both real and perceived safety. Other kinds of surveys are possible. Monthly surveys of graffiti and vacant housing could be accomplished by a walkthrough of the neighborhood, as could many other observable conditions of the community. These could be compiled, and used to create a baseline against which to judge progress. Even simpler surveys might be used by collaboratives – such as a questions at the monthly meeting “How many people here saw children riding bikes since the last meeting. How many of you saw children riding without bike helmets?” – a simple survey that could be charted on the wall and turned over time.

.....(5) **Working Baselines:** Consider using one or more working baselines, of the type used in the turn the curve exercises.

First ask the question: "If we could have data to measure these conditions of well-being in our community, what would we want?" Then for each of these answers use the following technique:

"Create a working baseline for purposes of the exercise, by asking the following questions: Is this indicator getting better or worse? Has it been going in this direction for a few years? Has it been getting (better or worse) fast or slow (steepness of baseline)? Do you think it will continue in this direction for the next several years if we stay on our current course (i.e. don't change what we do)?"

While this will not take the place of the need for real data, it will allow people to engage in real discussions of the story behind the curve and what works, the essence of the talk to action process. If this approach is not followed up at some point with real data we will be left wondering if our impressions of improvement or decline are real.

2.10 How do we create a report card and what do we do with it? (on child and family well-being, for other populations, for an entire community quality of life)

The Short Answer

- 1. Gain organizational and political sponsorship, necessary to produce the document and give it standing in the decision making process.
2. Identify results and indicators, using a broad process to involve partners, and grounded in a conceptually clear framework. See 2.5 and 2.6, and 2.7.
3. Gather the data, starting with the best available and pursuing your data development agenda. Use your political sponsorship for cooperation and access. See 2.8
4. Analyze and present the data in simple and compelling ways. Focus on analyses with direct policy implications. Keep presentations short and visually interesting.
5. Decide on recommendations. This can be published as part of the document or separately.

Full Answer

There is of course a whole paper written about this if you'd like to read it. Click here to go to the Finance Project website to read "A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets."

What follows is a summary of some of the key steps and some new learnings about how to do this work.

(1) Gain sponsorship: Producing a Family and Children's budget is a major undertaking, and needs the sponsorship and support. Two kinds of sponsorship are important: organizational and political. Organizational sponsorship follows from political sponsorship.

Tools

- 1. Report Card Web sites, which show how others have solved the data problem

Stories

- 1. Contra Costa County's Children's Report Card tracks state, county and neighborhood trends for 23 Indicators under 5 Results.
2. The Santa Cruz county-wide data book is a powerful tool for community change
3. Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets
4. Los Angeles County government organizes major planning efforts around County-Wide Results

Tips

Advice from:

- 1. Mary Lou Goeke, Executive Director, United Way of Santa Cruz County
2. Susan Brutschy, President and Community Assessment Project Director at Applied Survey Research
3. Christina Lynnville, Deputy County Administrator, Contra Costa County

Possible political sponsorship is complicated, but it boils down to these options: Inside or outside government. Inside government in the executive or legislative branches; with majority minority or even individual elected official support. Outside government by coalition or collaborative or by a single organization usually an advocacy organization.

Each political arrangement allows a set of organizational arrangements. Organizational support (meaning production wherewithal) can be lodged in the executive branch or legislative branch or private sector. In the executive branch it can be housed in the budget office, a major department, or best a collaborative or children's cabinet. In the legislative branch it is most likely to be housed in the staff arm or budget arm of the legislative body. In the private sector it can be housed in a single advocacy organization or a collaborative or council.

The purposes of sponsorship are twofold: First, organization support and financing is necessary to support the work and produce the products. But leverage, visibility, and utility may be even more important. Children's report cards, like children's budgets are political documents, and who sponsors them says a lot about how they will be seen and used. The obvious message here is to go for the highest level sponsorship possible, preferably joint executive legislative authorization and support. Before this is possible the report card may need to go through its development in the private sector.

There is an argument to be made that the report card should be developed by and remain in the private sector, as a means of providing an outside, "objective" view. This is in fact the way most report cards have been produced. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count report are mostly produced by private non-profit or university based organizations. The advantage here is flexibility. The possible disadvantage is access to data and standing in the political and budget processes. United Way's are playing an increasingly important role in the development of report cards. These organizations often represent at least partial neutral ground, and have the organizational resources to pull it off. Foundation or other private sector funding is often necessary.

(2) Identify results and indicators: Once the project is authorized and funded, the fun begins. Many report card efforts of the past have skipped "results" gone directly to the businesses of selecting indicators, and did this mostly on the basis of data power. So you end up with a report card that is the best of available data. The problem with this is that the indicators are a disembodied set of data with no anchor to the notion of well-being for the population being reported on. "Why these indicators?" one might reasonably ask. And the answer has more to do with the quality of data than the purpose of the data. The purpose of indicators is to help quantify results, conditions of well-being. Results themselves help be more specific about what we mean by well-being. So using results to select indicators produces a logic chain: "We're concerned about the well-being of children in our community. Here's what we mean by well-being in plain language (safe, healthy ready for school etc.). And here's the data we have available which can best tell us

- 4. [Yolie Flores Aguilar, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, and Jacquelyn McCroskey, Member and DATA Committee Chair, LA Children's Planning Council](#)
- 5. [Advice from Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan](#)

Organizational Resources

References

how we're doing on these conditions."

The process of identifying results and indicators is described in other parts of this guide. See [2.5](#) and [2.6](#), and [2.7](#).

(3) **Gather data:** See 2.8 [Where do we get the data for indicators? How do we get better data?](#)

(4) **Analyze and present the data:** These are related tasks. The best presentations allow the reader to easily and visually reach their own conclusions. There should be two parts to the analysis and presentation. First is the basic data for each indicator. There are many formats to choose from. The best are compound pictures, that is, pictures with more than one data element. The National Casey Foundation Kids Count report provides one of the best, the principle display using bars to show the amount of improvement or decline compared to national averages. This is supported on the same page by the actual value of the indicator and the state's ranking. One weakness in the Kid's Count format is that the comparison involves just two points in time, usually ten years apart. This is a difficult baseline to interpret because it tell nothing about what happened in between or about recent trends. An arguably more powerful, but also more complex presentation, would show multi-year baselines with as much history as possible and forecasts of where we are heading if we stay on our current course. See 2.11 [How do we create a baseline \(trend line\) for an indicator?](#) There have been a great number of excellent family and children's report cards produced in the last 10 years. [Click here for a list of websites with click-on links.](#)

Analyzing the data offers many options. This is the place where it is possible to tell the story behind the baselines, to describe causes and forces at work. Why does the data look the way it does? This is important because, just like in epidemiology, each cause is a pointer to potential action. The analysis should also include comparisons. First off are self comparisons, how much have things gotten better or worse. And secondly comparisons to others, including national and state averages and trends. Comparisons can also be made to other comparable jurisdictions. And finally to standards if they exist and targets or goals if they have been set.

A word on setting goals: If you set the goal without regard to time ("Our goal is 95% high school graduation.") then you can set the goal anywhere you like. But if your goal has a time component ("Our goal is 95% high school graduation by next year."), make sure the goals are ambitious but reasonable in light of the baseline. Unrealistic goals undermine the credibility of the effort.

(5) **Decide on recommendations:** Report cards provide a platform and opportunity to influence decisions about children families and communities. The press coverage of report cards is sometime the most concentrated attention these issues get in the press. If the report card is produced by government, then it is not likely to allow much in the way of specific recommendations. In this case private advocacy organizations can and should issue a companion analysis offering specific policy recommendations.

(6) **Produce and distribute the document:** Paper and electronic distribution, as widely as resources permit.

(7) Let's back up a step. Why do a Children's Report Card or a report card on the well-being of any population? Here are two images which might help.

Families and Children Inc. :Imagine that your collaborative is a corporation, and the group that meets regularly is the board of directors. But the bottom line for your enterprise is not profit, it is the well-being of children and families as measured on the various indicator baselines. As a corporation, you would need information on a regular basis, just as a corporation does, on how well you are doing. Periodic report cards provide this information in a systematic and disciplined way, not just for your board, but for the many stakeholders (stockholders) in your community.

Consoles: You are the chief engineer at a nuclear power plant. In front of you is a large console with a thousand dials and gauges on it. If the plant is to be operated safely, you need to pay close attention to a handful of these gauges. The gauges that are most important are larger than the ones that are less important. The temperature gauge in the main reactor is the biggest gauge. These large gauges are your indicators, and you run this literally life and death operation on the basis of that information. Those groups who come together to take responsibility for the well-being of children and families (or any other population) are faced with a system far more complex than a nuclear reactor. We too have many thousands of possible gauges to consider. When we select the most important measures to go into a report card we are selecting those that deserve to be larger than the others. And this report card can help us steer the enterprise of child and family well-being just as the plant manager steers the reactor and its many systems. So the report card is a console which can be used to steer the complex system (public and private, for profit and non-profit, paid professional and parent volunteer) supporting the well-being of children and families.

Report cards can help us stay on course when we've made progress. Take the example of Tillamook County where teen pregnancy rates rebounded after years of progress. Report cards can help us keep our eye on what is most important even when the numbers look good (or better) and take action to sustain progress.

Finally, one of the best arguments for a children's report card is the picture with of its absence. If we have no way to steer, we are left to literally wander. And this is much of the history of social policy. Through money at problems and hope for the best. The early navigators made progress by charting their path against the stars. Results and indicators and the star charts of report cards (and budgets) are the way we can navigate. No one has yet created a better way. (Stay tuned for the Social Policy Global Positioning System.)

2.11 How do we create a baseline (trend line) for an indicator?

The Short Answer

1. **Baselines have two parts: an historical part which shows where we've been, and a forecast part that shows where we are headed if we stay on our current course.**

2. **The historical part should have as much data as you can get. Aim for three to five years. If you have no historical data, then start the baseline where you are and build the history part over time.**

3. **Build one or more forecast scenarios using partners knowledgeable about causes and forces at work. Use statistical techniques as a tool not an answer. See the long form and short form techniques below for creating a forecast.**

Full Answer

- (1) **What are baselines: A baseline is a multi-year display of data with two parts: an historical part which shows where we've been, and a forecast part that shows where we are headed if we stay on our current course. Baselines allow us to define success as doing better than the baseline or "turning the curve."**

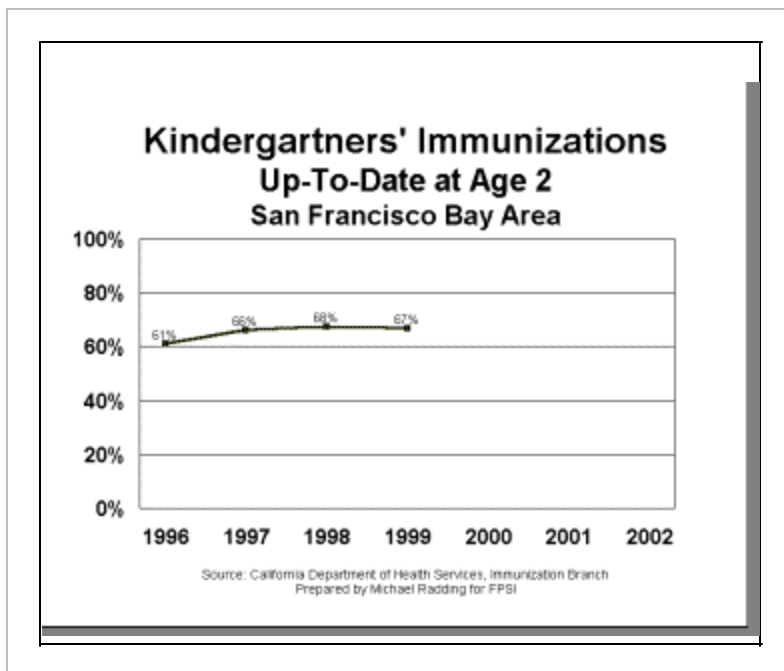
- (2) **Baselines serve two purposes. First they allow us to ask and answer the question: *Is this future OK?* If the percentage of 3rd graders reading at grade level^[7] has been declining for several years, *is it OK for it to continue to decline?* Look where we'll be in two years if this continues! Most processes of serious change start with the members of the community saying *This is NOT OK. We can do better.* Baselines with forecasts allow you to have this discussion.**

Second, baselines allow us to assess progress in terms of *doing better than the baseline*. This allows us to *account* as progress when we have slowed the rate at which things are getting worse, before we fully turn around and go in the right direction. This stands in contrast to the usual

Tools
1. <u>Technique: Creating a forecast for a baseline</u>
Stories
1. <u>How CBO forecasts the surplus and deficit</u>
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't let statistical experts dominate the process. 2. The most important part of forecasts is that they are credible. 3. Do not manipulate forecasts to set up an easy definition of success or overstate the importance of a proposed program or change in policy.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

definition of success: that things get better right away. This is often unrealistic when trends have been headed in the wrong direction for a long time. It takes time to turn the curve on such a trend line. If we do not use baselines to measure success, we set ourselves up for failure by creating unrealistic expectations of quick fixes.

The box below displays the history part of a sample baseline prepared for the training sessions for Prop 10 commissioners sponsored by the State Commission, the California Endowment and the Foundation Consortium.



(3) Forecasting is an art, not a science. It is necessary to get the right people around the table who can talk knowledgeably about the forces affecting the baseline and what are likely scenarios for change in the future. It often helps to have a statistical expert as part of the team, But this person should not be allowed to dominate the process. The best forecasting is not about technical statistical analysis. It involves people who know what's happening on the street and who can create two or three believable scenarios of the likely future. Statistical folks can help this process by analyzing trends and presenting data. But do not relinquish control of the forecasting work to the statisticians. Forecasts should reflect the consensus view of key partners about where we are heading.

(4) TECHNIQUE: Creating a forecast for a baseline. The hard part of baselines is, of course, the future. How good are economists or meteorologists at predicting the stock market or weather. Uncertainty is an unavoidable part of this part of the work.

Shortcut: Consider two simple ways to organize a discussion of forecast: Ask the following questions and at each step ask “why?”:

- (1) Do we think the trend will continue in the same direction?
- (2) Will it go in that direction faster, slower or about the same?
- (3) Do we think the trend will flatten out? When will it flatten out and at what level?
- (4) Do we think the trend will change direction? When? What will happen after?

Systematic: Here is another more structured way to do much the same thing:

Create a table with the months across the top and rows as follows:

Quarter:	-4	-3	-2	-1	Present	+1	+2	+3	+4
A. Begin quarter (3 months)	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	30	32
B. Changes during quarter									
1. Increment rate of growth/decline									
a. Historical pattern of increase at 1 per quarter						1	1	1	1
2. Changes due to demographics									
a. Older population moving out at faster rate						0	1	0	1
3. Changes due to economic conditions									
a. Economic conditions get worse over the next yr.						1	1	1	1
4. Other changes									
C. Forecast Path without action plan	21	22	23	24	25	27	30	32	35
D. Changes due to action plan									
1. Fix-up 5 houses per quarter						-5	-5	-5	-5

E. Forecast Path with action plan						22	20	17	15
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The group decides the factors to be considered in section B and the estimated value of each. So for example, a chart on forecasting vacant housing might look like this:

.....**Story:** Robert Reichauer, former director of the OMB described 4 factors that they considered in forecasting the surplus or deficit. (NPR interview 7/18/2000). Conceptually their technique is very close to the process described above. The four factors were:

- Performance of the economy (assume average for the next 10 years)
- Tax policy (assume status quo)
- Entitlement policy (assume status quo)
- Growth in discretionary spending (assume same rate as inflation)

(5) **Tell the story behind each baseline, or the story for all the baselines together.** What are the causes, the forces at work? Why does this picture look the way it does? Why are only 67% of our children immunized at age two? Why are so few of our 3rd graders reading at grade level? Why is it getting worse or improving so slowly? This is the **epidemiology** part of the work. Each part of the story is a pointer to action in the next stage. If one of the reasons 3rd grade reading scores are going down is that parents don't do a good job helping children build reading skills, then this is a pointer to parent education, support for library reading programs, campaigns to get reading material into the homes of families with young children etc. Be prepared for different stories and serious debate. As different partners add their perspectives, a rich picture will emerge about what is happening in the community and why children are, or are not, healthy and ready for school.

Remember: When considering the story behind the baselines, make sure, again to involve as many partners from as many different and diverse communities as possible. It is particularly important to involve parents in this thinking process. Those we are trying to help, often know more about the causes and likely successful approaches than the professionals.

In doing this work, it may be useful over time to develop the indicator baselines and the story behind the baselines into a *periodic report card* on **children healthy and ready for school.** Making this report card part of a larger report card on child and family well-being will help link Prop 10 work to other efforts in the county to improve results for children and families.

Another type of story which needs to be told is the *cost of bad results*. What is the price we pay when children are not healthy and not ready for school? Such costs show up in many places: as remedial education costs in the school system, as health care costs in the public and private sector, and later in such things as teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. Showing the costs of bad results helps make the economic case for additional investments in children and their families.^[8]

2.12 How do we identify what works to improve conditions of well-being?

The Short Answer

1. Look at the research, but don't be limited by research. Find out what has worked in other places to turn the curves you are working on. But research will never give us all or even most of the answers. Use your common sense and knowledge of your community to decide what will work here.
2. Consider no-cost and low-cost ideas. Money is important but it is not everything. The community has more energy than money can buy. When people are given permission to think about no-cost and low-cost actions, often half to two thirds of their ideas can be accomplished without new money.
3. There are two pointers to what works in the preceding steps of the process. Each element of the story behind the baseline is a pointer to action. And each partner or potential partner is a pointer to action.
4. Rate your ideas against criteria. Consider SPECIFICITY (Is this idea actionable?); LEVERAGE (How much impact will it have on the curve?); VALUES (Is it consistent with our personal and community values?); and REACH (Is it feasible and affordable this year, next year, 2 to 10 years).
5. Fit the pieces together. Having selected priorities for action is not the same as having a coherent plan. We need to consider how these pieces fit together in a system of services and supports, not just a loose confederation of good ideas.

Full Answer

- < Given the results we want (children healthy and ready for school) ;
- < Given the indicators of those results and the story behind the

Tools
1. <u>What Works Criteria Worksheet</u>
Stories
1. <u>Case Studies page</u> 2. <u>Santa Cruz County's united effort turns the curve on teen alcohol use: Together for Youth/Unidos Para Nuestros Jovenes</u> 3. <u>San Mateo County's Children's Summit Moves 350 Participants from Talk to Action.</u> 4. <u>Los Angeles County government organizes major planning efforts around County-Wide Results</u> 5. <u>Maryland Office of Children Youth and Families: improved teen pregnancy and infant mortality rates</u>
Tips
Advice from:
1. <u>Advice from Susan Ferren, Project Coordinator for the San Mateo County Children's Report and Summit</u>
Organizational Resources
References

< Given the indicators of those results and the story behind the indicator baselines;

1. [Vermont AHS What Works Series on line](#)

< Given the partners around the table

What works, what could work, to turn these conditions around? What would it take to have all children zero to age five healthy and ready for school? What would it take to have all children succeeding in school? The answers are a combination of science and common sense. The following sections do not give the answer (no one can) but rather offer an approach for you and your partners to figure out for yourself what will work to turn the curves in your community, city, county or state.

! **Look at the research.** The science part is about the research that has been done over the last 20 plus years on programs that actually make a difference in the well-being of young children and their families. While some of this is still controversial, we know that quality child care, regular health care, family support and parent education all play a key role in the healthy development of children. The chart displays the references in the Prop 10 legislation to what works. Prop 10 commissions should use these categories as a starting point for considering what works. There are some references in the appendices to other what works resources.^[9]

! **Don't be limited by research.** The common sense part is that not all things that work have been proven by the research community. What works ideas should build on your experience and what you and your partners know about the community in which you live. What do you think would work *here*? Involve as many partners as you can in this thinking process, including the parents of young children. Be disciplined about this part of the work as well. Not all ideas are good ideas. Test each idea against the question: **Would this make a difference in the well-being of young children and their families? Would it help turn the curves we are trying to turn?@**

! **Consider what has worked outside the county.** There is a growing body of experience from other counties, states and countries about what works to improve the well-being of children and families. This is sometimes referred to as **Abest@** or **Apromising@** practice. And a number of books, journals and websites provide access to this experience. Some of these are listed in Appendix A. Localities with successful efforts are usually willing to host visitors, and this can be a powerful way to get beneath the surface of advertised claims to what really worked or didn't work. Some technical assistance centers (also listed in Appendix A) can help arrange site visits or **Apeer to peer@** consulting within California and across the country. It goes without saying that what works in one community may not work in another. So, look for experience in counties and communities with economic and demographic characteristics similar to your own.

! **Consider no-cost and low-cost ideas.** No-cost and low-cost ideas can be among the most powerful parts of your plan. We have a tendency to think about everything as a money problem. And while money is certainly important, it is not the only way to turn a curve. There are many ways for partners to make contributions to this work (e.g. use of volunteers, advertising by the media, family friendly policies by the business community, support groups by the faith community, streamlined policy or procedure by public agencies etc.) that make a crucial contribution at low cost and without using public funding sources.^[10] When groups are given the challenge to turn a

curve (like reading scores or immunization rates), and are asked to include at least one no-cost or low-cost idea, it often happens that half to two thirds of the good ideas are no-cost or low-cost. The simple act of asking for no-cost and low-cost ideas has the effect of changing peoples= mindsets.

Remember: The purpose of Prop 10 planning is not how to spend the money. It's how to get the results we want. Prop 10 money used in combination with other resources in the community can do this.

! Use pointers to action. There are two pointers to what works in the preceding steps of the process. Each element of the story behind the baseline is a pointer to action. And each partner or potential partner is a pointer to action. The Commission should seek advice from a wide range of partners on what it would take to get all children healthy and ready for school. The Commission should ask each partner the following questions:

< What is your best assessment of whether our children are now healthy and ready for school and why?

< What could work in *this* county to improve this situation (including no-cost and low-cost ideas)?

< What can you contribute (time, money and expertise). How do I create a strategy to turn a curve or set of curves? (i.e. actually improve the measurable well-being of children, adults, families or the community as a whole)

Criteria for selecting what works and crafting them into a strategy

The notion of tables

The kind of process described above usually ends up with a long laundry list of everything anybody ever thought was a good idea to do for children and families, completely undisciplined and completely unaffordable. The trick in this work is not to create such a laundry list, but a coherent strategy, that we can actually afford to implement that will actually produce the results we want.

..... **Technique to Assess your what works ideas against criteria.** One way to do this is to assess the **what works** ideas according to established criteria. Four criteria are offered for your consideration:

See the
[What Works
Criteria Worksheet](#)

Specificity: Is the proposal specific about what will be done, when and by whom; or is it a rhetorical statement of need like **end poverty and cure disease.** Proposals need to take the form of an actionable item which can be funded and implemented.

Leverage: How great an impact will this proposal have on the curves we are trying to turn? We are looking for actions which are high leverage, not token efforts.

Values: Is the proposal consistent with our personal and our community's values. There are many proposals which are potentially effective which violate important principles of equity and fairness. The best approaches must be true to community values and must take into account differences in cultures and community norms.

Reach: Is it feasible and affordable? Can it be done this year, next year, or 3 to 10 years. This criteria can help space out our efforts over time.

What works ideas can be rated on a worksheet against these criteria. We are looking for actions which are high on all four criteria: actions which are specific, high leverage, consistent with our values and which can be implemented sooner rather than later. Each proposal can be rated high, medium or low on these four criteria. Those that rise to the top can become the first year's plan. Others that are high on the first three criteria, but lower on the fourth can be targeted for later years.

! Fit the pieces together. Having selected priorities for action is not the same as having a coherent plan. We need to consider how these pieces fit together in a system of services and supports, not just a loose confederation of good ideas. This means consideration of the charge in Prop 10 to create a *comprehensive, collaborative, integrated, consumer oriented and easily accessible system of services and supports* for young children and their families.

Create a special part of the process (a subcommittee or task force) to look at

- < how the system of services is configured,
- < the parts of the system that are difficult for families with young children to access or negotiate, and
- < how services can be made more accessible to families of different cultures
- < the opportunities we have to break down walls between service systems and lessen duplication and bureaucracy.

This group may identify additional action items which require funding, such as the creation of a resource and referral network for child care, the placement of new screening and diagnostic services in family centers, or the addition of evening and weekend hours for health care or child care services. These can be added to the what works agenda and ranked against other proposals.

Many of the changes necessary to improve the service system will involve no-cost and low-cost actions such as the collocation of existing services, creation of common forms across systems, shared intake and assessment services, or wrap around funding for children in out of home care.

One community labeled their work to make the system accessible **ANo wrong door®** meaning that every point of contact with the parents and children should involve knowledgeable workers who

could help access any service. Another image which might be helpful is that of a service system with a **Afront room** and a **Aback room**. In the front room, families and children get what they need in a seamless, culturally competent and consumer friendly way. In the back room we run the financial and technical systems necessary to make the front room work.

The product of this work should be a visual map of how the service system now looks, and how it should look, from the consumer's point of view. This can be used as a tool to move the system to become more friendly to families with young children. _

Remember: The purpose of this work is not planning. The purpose of this work is doing. There is a tendency for planners to become so enamored with their planning process they forget there are other things to do in addition to planning. It is necessary to do the best planning possible without letting the planning process itself become the point of the work.

A special note about service system reform. Systems reform has become a code word for making sense out of the highly categorical system of services which have grown up over the past 50 years. We now operate a system where it is entirely possible for the child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and education systems to all be working with the same family *and not even know it*. It is very important that we do the work necessary to make these systems work as one. But it is equally important that we keep these reform efforts in perspective. Systems reform of whatever sort is a means to improving results for children and families, it is not an end in itself. Take child welfare for example. We could have the best functioning child welfare system in the world, and rates of child abuse could continue to rise. The child welfare system is like the MASH unit in the Korean war, taking in casualties. Expecting to end child abuse by fixing the child welfare system is like asking the MASH units to end the Korean war.

Front Room - Back Room: One useful and powerful image which can be used to describe the intent of systems reform efforts (as part of larger strategies to improve results) is the idea of front room and back room. (NOTE: Cite first reference to this idea in one of the CSSP or FP papers.) One day we would like to have a service system which has a front room and a back room. In the front room, children and families will get what they need, based on *what they need*, not this crazy collection of categorical programs we have created. In the back room we'll categorize the hell out of them so we can claim every conceivable dollar to pay for what's in the front room. Right now we have just a back room. And as a consequence the funding system very often drives the service system, when it should be the other way around.

An important implication or corollary of the front-room back room image is that it is not necessary to fix the financing system for services before fixing the service system itself. The accumulation of funding requirements from federal state and local laws is enormously complex, and it is unlikely that there will be any coordinated action any time soon to make sense of it. But the funding system is often used as an excuse for not trying to make sense of the service system. This is just an excuse. If you can figure out what you want the front room to look like, then creative fiscal people and other partners can make it happen.

2.13	How do we create an action plan and budget?
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The Short Answer

1. An action plan describes who will do what when and how. Action plans are developed after your strategy is developed. For each element of the strategy, identify tasks down the left column and across the top: who is responsible (primary and secondary), begin and end dates, and a column for status reporting

2. A budget describes what will be funded and how. Most budgeting processes involve four basic steps:

- Develop a list of what you want to do: In results accountability this means what works to turn the curves
- Prioritize the list: This means using criteria, like specificity, leverage, values and reach.
- Attach a price tag to each item.
- Take the money you have and buy as far down the list as you can.

Full Answer

(1) If you can, read the full answer to Question [2.12](#) first.

(2) Let's take action plan first. The basic notion of an action plan is who does what when and how. This is the most ancient part of planning. Even hunters from the distant past had action plans, although they were usually only a few pages, with bad spelling and grammar. (Urg chase mammoth. Then Brk throw spear.)

So if you can agree on a strategy and set of actions and can space those actions out over several years, you have the ingredients for an action plan. There are lots of different ways to structure an action plan. It can be as simple as a list of things to do, or as complicated as the Normandy invasion.

[Budget Formats](#)

Tools

1. [A Possible Action Plan Outline](#)
2. [Budget Formats](#)

Stories

1. [MADD turns the curve on alcohol related traffic deaths.](#)
2. [Santa Cruz County's united effort turns the curve on teen alcohol use: Together for Youth / Unidos Para Nuestros Jovenes.](#)
3. [Tillamook County turns the curve on the teen pregnancy rate.](#)

Tips

1. See [The Language of Accountability](#) for help with terms like "goals and objectives."

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

1. "The Cosmology of Financing." [FPSI website](#)
2. "Financing Reform,

(3) Think of an action plan as a chart with tasks running down the left column. Across the top are the following columns: description of task; who is responsible (it is often a good idea to show primary and secondary responsibility or lead and support responsibility), when the task starts and when it should be finished. Most forms of this kind leave a column or two at the far right for status reporting.

**A Possible Action
Plan Outline**

Reforming Finance"
[Foundation Consortium website.](#)
3. "A Strategy Map for Results-Based Budgeting" [The Finance Project website](#)

The left most column (tasks) usually shows the major strategic elements of the plan with the steps or tasks listed below each. These major elements and implementation tasks are sometimes called GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. (See the [Language of Accountability](#)). [Click here](#) to see an example of an action plan in this format.

(4) How to create a budget is a trick question. Because the creation of budgets are integrally part of the process of deciding what to do. There is a necessary back and forth process between what we want to do, how much it will cost and whether we have the money to do it. Here is the usual (and oversimplified) way this happens. (All budgeting can be boiled down to these four steps.)

- (1) Develop a list of what you want to do, what works to turn the curves, using the thinking process described above (or some other method - throwing darts - popularity contest etc.)
- (2) Prioritize the list. This can be done in a number of different ways. One way is to use selected criteria to judge each item.
- (3) Attach a price tag to each item.
- (4) Take the money you have and buy as far down the list as you can.

Now the interesting part of budgeting comes in the different ways these steps can be done and the order in which they are done.

Step 1: The traditional way of answering step one is to skip all the steps in results-based budgeting up to the what works question. Ask everybody what they think works and what they want to do. This process has been used for a long time. But the problem is that everyone has a different idea of why they are doing it. In the absence of results and indicators, people will answer the what works question in any way they want (self interest, favorite program, dream they had last night) without regard to whether it might in fact turn the curves. We sometimes call this initiative based budgeting. "We're going to have a children's initiative this year. What should be in it? And you're off and running. The results based thinking process described in this and other papers is a disciplined alternative to initiative based budgeting.

Step 2: There are any number of ways to prioritize a list. There are group process voting procedures that work well. One way to help guide this kind of process is to agree in advance on the criteria to be used to judge each possible item on the list. One set of criteria is offered above: *specificity* (Is the item actionable?); *leverage* (How much effect will it have on turning the curve?); *values* (Is it consistent with personal and community values); and *reach* (Is it feasible and

affordable?)

Step 3: Figuring out how much something costs is not an easy thing to do. It is possible to use rough estimates to give people a sense of this in step 2. But sooner or later you must be serious about good estimates of cost. There are two parts to how much something costs: the total cost and your cost. These are not the same thing. If friends are pitching in to help you pay the rent this month, then the total cost is what you pay the landlord. And your cost is the total less your friends contributions. The image works for financing children and family services. You want as much money from your friends as possible. This means money from public and private sources. From public sources it means it means federal, state and local dollars. For federal funds it means money from capped funding sources (like the Social Services Block Grant or Drug Free Schools grants), and it means entitlement funding (where your money is matched by federal money (like Medicaid and federal foster care and adoption - Titles IVE and XIX of the Social Security Act). For more information about funding see question 2.14 [How do we finance a results-based plan?](#) or go to the [EPSI website](#) and read "The Cosmology of Financing," See also "Financing Reform, Reforming Finance" at the [Foundation Consortium website](#).

Step 4: The limiting part of this step is "the money you have." Budgeting and finance is not just about the money you have but the money you could get. And it is about finding no-cost and low-cost means, not just costly ones. One way of going beyond this is to take each element of the plan and think about how that item could be funded. Use the money you have as a last resort, to match other money or serve as an incentive. Think of the ways in which your partners can help you both with cash and non-cash resource. The point is to think broadly and systematically about all the possibilities. (see question [2.14](#))

2.14	How do I finance a results-based plan?
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The Short Answer

1. Make sure the action agenda drives financing and not the other way around.
2. Consider financing as a matter of packaging together many different resources. No single financing source will do the job.
3. Stretch your resources by using them to leverage other resources. Seek funding options in the following priority order: < no-cost, items < items fully funded by other partners without your dollars < items funded jointly with your dollars and other funds, and < items funded solely with your dollars.
4. Consider each element of your plan one at a time and consider all the possible ways that element could be financed. Use the [SIMPLE FINANCING SELF ASSESSMENT Questionnaire](#) to take a pass at the following types of financing and their many subcategories:
 - **Redeployment:** Using money and non-monetary resources already in the system.
 - **Revenue:** Finding new money and resources.
 - **Restructuring:** Changing the laws of the universe which drive the use of money and resources.
5. Put the financing ideas into a coherent plan, assign responsibility to pursue opportunities and get started.
 - Redeployment (using the money already in the system)

Full Answer

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A SIMPLE FINANCING SELF ASSESSMENT Questions to Answer about Financing an Agenda to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families
Stories
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure the action agenda drives financing, not the other way around. 2. Remember no-cost low-cost approaches. Not everything is about money. 3. Use your own money last. Leverage other money through contributions and match.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The Cosmology of Financing." FPSI website 2. "Financing Reform, Reforming Finance" Foundation Consortium website. 3. "A Strategy Map for Results-Based Budgeting"and

(1) A crucial part of developing any action plan is consideration of how the elements can be funded. It is beyond the scope of this guide to fully explore this part of the work. The overall plan should include four types of action items:

"A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets [The Finance Project website](#)

- < no-cost, items**
- < items fully funded by other partners without your dollars**
- < items funded jointly with your dollars and other funds, and**
- < items funded solely with your dollars**

The object of the game is to minimize items in the last category.

With regard to joint funding, it is important to consider the ways in which available funds can be used as match for open-ended federal funding under MediCal (Title XIX) and Federal Foster Care Title IV-E). These sources can sometimes be used to help pay for services with a medical or therapeutic component, or which address the needs of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Don't let the availability of such match determine what you decide to fund. But for things you want to fund anyway, this can have the effect of multiplying your money.

(3) In doing this work it may also be useful to develop a map of how funds are now deployed for services to young children and their families. A growing number of counties in California have developed children's budgets to provide such a picture. Prop 10 Commissions may wish to supplement these efforts by developing an analysis specific to services for children prenatal to age five.

(4) The Cosmology of Financing or Paying for reform of the family and children's service system (Excerpted from the "What Works Policy Brief: Financing Reform, Reforming Finance," Foundation Consortium, January 2000).

The original "Cosmology of Financing" can be read on the [FPSI website](#).

Imagine that you could come up with an ambitious agenda of things that you think will work to improve results for children and families in your community. How could you pay for it? The cosmology of financing is a systematic way of considering all the possible ways to finance such an agenda. The main categories:

- Using money and non-monetary resources already in the system: redeployment and reinvestment**
- Finding new money and resources: revenue and refinancing**
- Changing the laws of the universe which drive the use of money and resources: restructuring**

How does it work? When it comes to financing most people are stuck thinking about resources in just one or two ways. It is absolutely essential to consider every possible approach and craft financing packages to support our agenda for children and families. There are no magic funding

sources. Successful financing plans bring together many elements. As you develop your financing plan, think about how each of the approaches discussed below can be applied to each of the elements in your agenda.

1. Using Money (and non monetary resources) Already in the System: Investing and Reinvesting:

Investment and Reinvestment: The first order of business is using the resources already in the system. And the biggest of those resources are the huge sums now being spent on remediation. How could we tap this bank account for prevention investments.

Imagine a company where the investments in research and development paid off big time in sales. But the sales department and the research and development department were separated by an accounting fire wall. R&D had to be self supporting without any of the profits from sales. Couldn't be done. Because investment and the profit show up in different parts of the company's budget. And unless the enterprise can be thought of as a whole, there is no way to make the investment engine go.

The same thing is true in children's services. Invest in recreation services, and the benefits show up in juvenile probation. Try to make recreation pay for itself and it can't be done. Link the two and maybe it can. Invest in family support centers and the savings show up in lower health costs by public and private providers. Try to make family centers pay for themselves and it can't be done.

The way businesses answer this question is by linking investment and return on investment (ROI) and considering the value of investments over time. By anticipating a credible return on investment, it is possible to use funds up front to be paid back later, with profit for the shareholders left over.

The problem with applying this idea to children and family services centers on the word "credible." There have been many undisciplined attempts to argue for a return on investment in children and family services, to the point that people in positions of responsibility, like yourself, are rightly skeptical. We have a few examples where the investment-return-on-investment structure has been shown to work reasonably well. The best examples are investments in family preservation services designed to keep children out of unnecessary placement in out of home care.

The key to the success of these investments is the disciplined targeting of intensive services to children who would have gone into care without such services. Obviously if you apply these new services to children who never would have gone into care in the first place, you incur all the new expense and get none of the savings. (See "For More Information" section) What is unusual about this investment in particular is that the savings show up in less than 2 years, an unusually short time for this kind of work. Another reason the ROI method works with family preservation is that we know exactly where to look for the savings and with fairly simple budgeting tools can credibly capture it.

The technology to do this on a broader scale is described in "Capturing Cash for Kids." (See

"For More Information" section.) Let's say we could invest in preventive children services, such as (child care, recreation, family support, teen jobs, mentoring etc.) in such a way that we could actually track and capture the cost savings and cost avoidance which occur several years later in the deep end systems like foster care, juvenile justice and health care. What if we could strike a political deal that any savings or cost avoidance captured this way would be reinvested back into prevention services to generate more savings in the future. This would be a reinvestment deal.

The accounting and budget techniques necessary to identify credible savings and cost avoidance effects are within the reach of many budget shops. But leadership is needed, along with thinking outside the budget boxes, to harness basic business investment principles to this challenge.

"What if we could strike a political deal that any savings or cost avoidance... would be reinvested back into prevention services to generate more savings in the future. This would be a reinvestment deal."

Generating a return on investment from deep end services is the most important redeployment approach. There are several other forms of redeployment to consider: wrap-around redeployment, cut-based redeployment and material redeployment. Let's take a look at each one briefly. Wrap-around redeployment is reuse of money being spent for an individual child. All the funds now being spent for a child in expensive out of home placement are considered as a single total - and a service team is permitted to design an individual program "wrapped around" the child, providing they do so at the same total cost or less. When this technique is used to bring children home from out of state or care or expensive institutional care to community based services, the package can come in at 70% or less of the original cost. These are funds already in the system redeployed to pay for better service.

Cut-based redeployment is, at its heart, the age old business of cutting one thing to fund another. We in human services have a very bad track record of voluntarily cutting anything. So we wait until it is forced on us and then make the hard choices. But there is no reason we could not make the hard choices now, providing one protection is in place. The money cut in this way must go back into improved services for children and families. Without this assurance, cutting will always wait for the mandates and emergencies. It is possible for us to create new efficiencies in service delivery and to face up to programs that are not working well, and to use these savings to fund services needed to improve results. One of the best examples of this occurred under the administration of Governor Roberts in Oregon. The Governor asked state agencies to cut over \$100 million, and then allowed them to reapply for the money based on what would have the greatest impact on the state's priority benchmarks.

Material redeployment addresses the non-monetary resources already in the system. We commonly see this used when staff are collocated at a family support center, or space and equipment are "contributed" to some new enterprise. One of the best examples of this is the actual bartering of one service for another, which occurred between a child care provider and a drug treatment provider in Chicago. One provider got child care for its patients. The other got drug treatment for its children's mothers. No money changed hands. If there is an agenda to be financed, some of it can come from the use of non-monetary resources already in the system. 2. Finding New Money and Resources:

Refinancing involves using someone else's money to pay for services already provided, thereby freeing up your own (general) funds for new use. Refinancing has been mostly applied to services eligible for some form of open-ended federal reimbursement. By increasing federal claims for these services, state or local general purpose funds are freed up.

The principle challenge in refinancing is keeping the freed-up money in the system of services for children and families. Unfortunately, the history of this work over the last 20 years shows that more often the freed-up money is taken away and used for other purposes. When this happens, the child and family service system is actually worse off, having all the new paperwork for the new federal claims, and nothing in terms of new resources to show for it. If you can solve the problem of getting a firm commitment to reinvest earnings from such efforts, then it may be worth going forward. "The principle challenge in refinancing is keeping the freed- up money in the system of services for children and families."

Federal entitlement fund sources are much diminished from 10 years ago, but there are two important ones still left. Title IVE of the Social Security Act allows states to claim costs associated with low income children in foster care, subsidized adoption, and some pre-foster care placement costs. Medicaid (Title XIX) of the Social Security Act) provides a wide range of funding for medical and related services for low income children in the health, mental health, social service, and education systems.

The principle way to increase IVE claims is to increase the percent of eligible children. Many states and counties have increased their IVE eligibility rate into the 70% or better range, bringing a significant increase in reimbursement. The other way to increase IVE claims is to broaden the type of expenses claimed. Here, recent work is pushing the boundary of expenditures that can be claimed as preplacement prevention work and administrative expense.

The way to increase Medicaid claiming parallels the strategies for IVE: increase the percent of eligibles and the scope of claiming. In Medicaid the scope of claiming comes first. California and many other states have established a method for school districts to claim reimbursement for medically related services provided to special education students as part of an Individualized Education Plan (the LEA billing option). Many other services in public health, mental health, social services can also be made to qualify for Medicaid reimbursement. And many activities performed by workers in these systems can be claimed as Medicaid administration under broadly established definitions of this type of expense. "The way to increase Medicaid claiming parallels the strategies for IVE: increase the percent of eligibles and the scope of claiming."

The principle difficulty in this kind of work is the risk of audit. The federal rules are complex, though not impossible, and it is essential that the work be done carefully to assure that the new claims don't have to be paid back later. If this precaution is met, and there is a reinvestment commitment, then refinancing can produce significant new resources to support a plan for improving results for children and families.

Revenue: There are many other ways to increase revenue other than the increasing federal claims to displace state and local funds.

There is new federal funding available as a consequence of the improved economy (e.g. increased funding for child care, community development and education) and there is new flexibility in the use of existing funding (e.g. the new EdFlex bill provides flexibility to all states in the use of federal education funding). Among the most important revenue sources is the surplus in the TANF welfare program caused by significant reductions in caseloads since the end of the last recession. At the state level, new funding is also available. The improved economy has created budget surpluses in all but two of the fifty states. And new fund sources, like Prop 10, are opening up new possibilities.

Private funding is growing at an even greater pace. The growth in the stock market has significantly increased the endowments of many foundations who are required by law to give away a minimum percent of assets each year. And new foundations have been formed as a result of the conversion of non-profit to for-profit health providers. Corporations are also important sources of funding for children and family services, particularly when the plan component is linked to their service enterprise (e.g. health providers supporting immunization efforts).

And there are many ways to raise revenue by improving 3rd party collections (e.g. child support medical support obligations), by charging fees for services (even modest fees can help), by actively seeking donations (one family support center in Maryland has over 300 supporters in their neighborhood). And don't forget the importance of volunteer and other contributed resources (e.g. mentoring and food banks).

3. Changing the Laws of the Universe: Restructuring: The last category is about changing the incentives which drive money toward the things we want and away from the things we don't. Again this is common practice elsewhere in the world, notably the tax system, where tax incentives drive investments in home ownership and contributions to the non-profit community.

These concepts can be applied to family and children's services in a number of ways. Performance incentives can promote change by rewarding good practice. Flexible funding can allow discretionary use of funds by line workers (e.g. payment of a housing deposit to keep a family together and the children out of foster care). Funding pools can provide flexibility at the system level to allow savings in remediation to be spent on prevention.

These elements of the "cosmology" are intended to be used after an action agenda for children and families has been developed. Partners then take each element of the action plan and think through how each type of funding strategy in the cosmology can be brought to bear on that element over a multi-year period. The ideas are then consolidated into a funding plan that identifies what is to be funded, who are the potential funding partners, what are the potential resources, who is responsible for pursuing each resource and a timetable for action.

2.15 OK, so what's the link to the budget?

The Short Answer

1. Budgets are about choices. And results based budgeting (ends to means thinking, talk to action thinking) should lead to better choices. Given these new choices, the decision makers may or may not make better decisions.

2. Budgets are about allocating scarce resources. Results based budgeting does not presume that money is the (whole) answer. Results based budgeting draws on partner's contributions, and seeks the highest leverage for scarce resources.

3. Thinking from results to budgets can be used to drive any of the following components of a budget process: Assess spending priorities, create recommendations, write justifications, reallocate funding, request additional funding, revise budget forms, make judgments about what's working and what's not working, create joint funding plans with partners, show no-cost and low cost contributions, create new tools like children's budgets and cost of bad results analyses, create cross-departmental spending analyses and budgets, provide local partners fund flexibility in exchange for results accountability, structure internal budget reviews and legislative branch budget hearings, format and present the budget to the public.

Full Answer

This answer supplements the answer provided in 2.13 [How do we create and action plan and budget?](#)

(1) Assess spending priorities and create recommendations: The process of setting priorities will always be a political process. Results thinking can inform that process by presenting spending options in terms of alignment with results: i.e. "Does the spending proposal make a contribution to the results we are trying to achieve?" "Is it

Tools

1. [Results and Performance Budget formats - Volume I and II](#)
2. [A Strategy Map for Results Based Budgeting](#)
3. [Approaches to Budget Cuts](#)
4. [San Mateo County budget excerpt](#)
5. [A script for introducing a results-based budget by a department director](#)
6. [Exercise to Design a Legislative Results Hearing](#)
7. [Exercise to Design a Legislative Performance Hearing](#)

Stories

Tips

1. Don't try to do in all in one year.
2. Don't make it a paper exercise.
3. In designing the process, live by this rule: "If it's not useful, don't do it."

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

part of a credible larger strategy?" "Is it the most powerful use of resources toward that end?" Specific criteria can help establish priorities: [Specificity, Leverage, Values and Reach](#)

(2) Write justifications: Shift from justifying actions on the basis of "need" and "problems" to the positive conditions we are trying to create for children, adults, families and communities, and how this program or spending proposal will move us toward those conditions.

Use the logical progression in results thinking to structure written justifications: results, indicators, baselines, story behind the baselines, partners, what works, action plan and budget.

(3) Cut or reallocate funding: Cutting is a necessary and important part of budgeting. Most cutting is done under duress, when revenues and spending are out of line. Rarely is cutting done because something isn't working. And partly the reason for this is the ambiguity of what it means to be "working." Results thinking adds just a little clarity to this question. "Is a program or expenditure working (as part of a larger strategy) to improve results?" The answer to this question is a combination of art and science, just as budgeting is both art and science. Formal evaluation findings can tell us if a program is making a difference for clients/customers. Performance accountability provides for use of baselines to judge if a program is doing better than it's history or satisfactorily in relation to comparable programs or relevant standards.

The "[Approaches to Budget Cuts](#)" chart displays two different approaches to budget cutting. The first, traditional approach, sorts spending into "mandated and non-mandated categories, based on law; and then according to impact on life, health and safety. This approach leads to cuts in non-mandated low life-health-safety spending (usually prevention and infrastructure) and protects mandated high life-health-safety spending. This approach to cuts leads over time to disinvestment in prevention and erosion of infrastructure.

A results based approach first separates spending for "maintenance and infrastructure" from spending which is designed to improve results. Maintenance and infrastructure includes everything from highways to welfare benefits. The decision to be made is whether this spending is necessary or not. "What level of disrepair is acceptable? What level of destitution for dependent children is acceptable." These are mostly value based decisions. Programs to improve results include prevention investments like immunizations, family preservation or welfare to work programs. The decision to be made is whether this spending is helping to turn a curve. "Is this spending making a measurable difference in the well-being of children, adults, families or communities, as measured by indicators and performance measures?" This is mostly a fact-based decision.

(4) Request additional funding, show no-cost low-cost contributions: The first order of business is to show that we are making the best use of the resources we already have. The answer to every problem is not new money. Many communities which have successful turn the curve stories to tell have done much of the work with resources already in the community. This does not mean that new money is not needed. Our investments in children and families are far below what is needed to turn the curve on the cost of bad results. Results based budgeting can be used to logically describe why new money is needed by placing new money requests inside a larger strategy to turn

1. "The Cosmology of Financing." [FPSI website](#)
2. "Financing Reform, Reforming Finance" [Foundation Consortium website.](#)
3. "A Strategy Map for Results-Based Budgeting" [The Finance Project website](#)

the curve(s). New money can be used to address gaps in that larger strategy and leverage other dollars (federal matching funds and private contributions) to fill those gaps.

(5) Revise budget forms, budget formats and present the budget to the public: If this new way of thinking is to become part of the way we do business, then it must be reflected in the budget processes and specifically in the budget forms we use. Budget forms are surprisingly important. They are the codification of the way budget staff put the budget together. There is much detail in budget forms that are not affected by changing to a results approach. There will always be a need for line item detail, for funding detail, for personnel detail etc. Most budget forms and printed budget formats are dry recitation of facts. A results based budget tells a story to decision makers and to the public. At the performance level, that story is about how well the program or agency is working in terms of the well-being of its customers or clients. The progression from customer results to baselines to story behind the baselines to partners to what works to proposed budget provides a natural progression for budget processes and budget forms (See the [San Mateo County budget excerpt](#)). At the population level, this same progression can be used to tell the story of how the state, county, or city plans to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

(6) Make judgments about what's working and what's not working: The performance budgeting component of results based budgeting makes use of baselines, showing how a program is doing in relation to its own history, and to comparable performance of other programs and where relevant program standards. The review of performance is not something that should be done for the budget process. It should be done every month or quarter because that is what good managers do. The budget becomes a by-product of this work. Each month or quarter, performance measurement should ask and answer the questions: "Is this program working?" "What can we do to make it work better?" Budget processes can not wait for evaluations to be done. Judgments need to be made without formal evaluation data. The performance measurement thinking process provides a basis for such judgments.

(7) Create joint funding plans with partners: No one program, on one agency, no one level of government can, by itself, turn a curve on a condition of well-being. Results provide a *reason* to partner. And results budgeting can be a mechanism to create strategies and funding plans which span across the enterprise to turn the curve.

(8) Create cross-departmental spending analyses and budgets: No one agency can, by itself, reshape an entire service system. The out-of-home care system, for example, involves child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and education, plus a wide array of private providers. The current budgeting system does not provide a complete picture of spending for such systems. And yet such a picture is necessary to make sense of any reform effort and in particular how to fund such an effort and how to rearrange the financing to support the new system.

(9) Create new tools like children's budgets and cost of bad results analyses: Children's budgets are complete pictures of spending for children and their families in a given geographic area. Children's budgets progress through three stages of development: a line item summary of spending for children and families; a functional (or service type) summary of spending; and a results (turn the curve) summary of spending. The functional summary can provide the kind of analysis addressed in (8) above. But children's budgets, at their best, are strategic documents,

which present choices about our future and how it might be financed. Children's budgets therefore have two functions: to present facts and to present choices. The most important of these choices will be about investing in the well-being of children and families so that we will see better results and lowered costs of bad results in the future.

(10) Provide local partners fund flexibility in exchange for results accountability: Most money flows from the federal government to state government to local government with lots of strings attached. These strings taken together have tied local service delivery systems up in knots. It is possible to craft state local agreements which provide new fund flexibility in the use of categorical dollars in exchange for new results accountability. These agreements must be negotiated agreements and must answer, at a minimum, the following questions: Who is accountable, For what results, With what money, With what standards and safeguards, With what risks rewards and penalties, For what period of time? Such agreements exist in Iowa's Decategorization program, in Maryland's agreement with Montgomery County, and in Vermont's agreements with local partnerships.

(11) Structure internal budget reviews and executive and legislative branch budget hearings: Any process which can be used to develop a budget can also be used to structure review of that budget. The thinking progression in results-based budgeting can be applied to structuring internal budget reviews and also executive and legislative branch budget hearings. Each step in the thinking process represents a set of questions that can be asked and answered in budget review and hearing processes.

Example: Results accountability hearing on "all children ready for school" Ask "what are the indicators that tell us if all children are ready for school? How are we doing on those indicators? Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better? What works to do better? What do you propose to do? (See [Exercise to Design a Legislative Results Hearing](#) and [Exercise to Design a Legislative Performance Hearing](#))

Example: Performance accountability internal budget review for the foster care program: What are the most important performance measures for foster care? How are we doing on those measures? Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better? What do you propose to do?

(12) Here are some practical first steps you could take to link results accountability to the budget, and some more ambitious longer term things to do.

In the process as we know it today

(a) Use the what works strategy to develop a set of recommendations for additional or changed funding in the budget process at the enterprise or agency/program level. (Results and/or Performance accountability)

(b) Use the what works strategy as the basis for seeking additional funding support from the private sector (e.g. foundations, business etc.) to show as contributions to

state or county or city funding in the next budget cycle. (It always helps to show you are trying to match or leverage general funds to bring in other funding.)

(c) Revise the budget forms: Revise the budget forms to reflect this thinking process. This is more likely to be done at the performance accountability level. (SEE SAN MATEO COUNTY): Program, 2 or 3 performance measure baselines, story behind the baselines, what works, recommendations for budget change plus the usual detail by object/subobject and by fund source.

(d) Develop and use a Family and Children's Budget to inform the budget development process and allow an analysis of budget actions after the Executive Branch submits the budget and after the legislative branch acts on the budget.

In the process of the future:

(a) Results Accountability: Structure interdepartmental teams by results. Staff a process by which they review the status of all indicators each quarter and report changes in the action plan, and recommended changes in the budget.

(b) Print a Volume I of the budget which is about how the state, county or city is doing on key results (e.g. Clean environment, Healthy and Safe Children, etc.); and a Volume II which is organized by Department, program, subprogram, etc, but which uses the revised budget forms above.

(c) Hold legislative or county council hearings for one or more results:

[See a script for introducing a results-based budget by a department director](#)

2.16 How do we create a Family and Children's Budget (an Elder's Budget, An Environmental Budget) and what do we do with it?

The Short Answer

1. Study what others have done. Don't reinvent the wheel.
2. You will need political and organizational sponsorship, access to data and paid or volunteer staff with good financial analytical skills.
3. Design what you want the budget document and analyses to look like at the beginning of the process and work backward to the necessary data gathering.
4. Decide what is to be considered "family and children" expenditures; assemble data and create an expenditure data base; create analyses, recommendations and draft report; circulate for review; revise; publish, and distribute; promote use in the executive and legislative branch decision making processes; promote media interest in the work; debrief process and plan for next edition.

Full Answer

(1) Creating a Family and Children's budget is both technically and politically/organizationally challenging. You can not do it without some form of politically viable sponsorship, the active cooperation of key players who control access to budget data, and at least one capable "numbers person" who can devote significant time to the work (half to full time).

Many of the technical, and some of the political challenges are addressed in the Finance Project's publication: "A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets." This guide will not provide anywhere near the detail of the Finance Project paper. If you are seriously considering creating a Family and Children's budget, we strongly encourage you to read the entire paper. The text of the paper can be read at the Finance Project's

Tools

The following appendices from the Finance Project's "A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets" ([Finance Project website](#)):

1. Appendix A: A Partial Inventory of Family and Children's Budgets
2. Appendix D: Some of the Most Important Source Documents for National and State Data.

Stories

1. [Contra Costa County's Children and Family Services Budget relates county expenditures to community results.](#)

Tips

1. Take the time to design the analyses you want and then work backward to the data gathering necessary to produce those analyses.

Advice from:

1. [Sara Hoffman, Assistant County Administrator, Contra Costa County](#)

Organizational Resources

1. Finance Project "Guide" Appendix C: Organizational

paper. The text of the paper can be read at the Finance Project's website (see References in the sidebar). The paper's last appendix (F) includes selected examples of charts, graphs and formats from actual budget documents. This is available from the printed version only.

Resources for Data on Federal and State Children's Expenditures

References

1. "A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets," at the [Finance Project website](#)

Most importantly you should gather up as many Family and Children's budgets as you can. You will learn more by looking at one of these documents than reading any paper on the subject. Some of the best Family and Children's budgets are those being produced in California counties, notably Los Angeles County (County Administrative Office - budget office and the Children's Planning Council), Contra Costa County (County Administrative Office), Family Action of Sonoma County (a private non-profit advocacy organization) and San Francisco (Mayors Office of Children Youth and Families)..

(2) Let's deal with the technical part first. Here is a list of the basic steps in creating a family and children's budget:

(a) Design analyses: As in any good product development, the work should start with design. Start by considering the analyses that you would like to have at the end of the work, and how you would use these analyses. This last point is particularly important. Some past efforts have produced tables and graphs which were "nice to know" but were not particularly useful in making budget recommendations. It is worth taking the time to design the analyses you want and then work backward to the data gathering necessary to produce those analyses. (This is simply putting results accountability principles into practice.)

(b) Decide on scope: There are a range of design considerations beyond the structure of the analysis. Will the budget include all funding, federal state local and private or some subset? Most children's budgets start by assembling data for one level of government (e.g. state, county or city) and report on spending which passes through that government's budget process. This may include funding received from (intergovernmental transfers or matching programs. Data on private sector spending is much harder to obtain. Those jurisdictions that have included private spending in their Family and Children's budget (notably Los Angeles County) have obtained that information through a survey of private agencies.

(c) What's in and what's out? This question is more complicated than it seems. From one perspective, all expenditures are for children. Children ride in cars on roads, therefore the transportation department should be part of a children's budget and so forth. Generally you are looking for expenditures that directly benefit children or families with children. The Finance Project paper has a long discussion of sorting "rules," which can help you organize this part of the work.

(d) Assemble data and create spending database; : Easy to say, hard to do. This is like investigative reporting. If you are not the keepers of the data, you must visit the

people who own the data, get them to help you understand what it means. The best reports include data for at least 4 years: two years of history, the current operating year estimated actuals and the proposed budget year requested or appropriated amounts. More than two years of historical data allows a better picture of baselines/trends. Some programs, like elementary and secondary education, foster care and juvenile probation) can be taken into the report in their entirety. Other program which serve multiple populations, like the Medicaid program, housing and employment programs, will require that some share of expenditures be attributed to children and their families. The data gathered will also go beyond just fiscal data. It will be necessary to gather and become conversant with associated program performance data.

(e) **Create analyses, recommendations and draft report:** If you have done a good job of designing the analyses first, then this will be much easier. You must decide if the budget is to be a factual reference only or one which puts forward policy recommendations. Most Family and Children's budgets produced inside government do not include explicit recommendations, and serve as a base for other organizations to produce these under their own auspices. Family and Children's budgets produced by private outside agencies are much more likely to include policy recommendations in the document itself. There are a wide range of analyses which are possible from a good expenditure data base. For example, it is possible to compare the growth in general fund expenditures for children to the rate of growth in overall general fund spending to see if children are getting "their fair share." The inverse analysis can be produced in times of budget reductions. It is possible to create pictures of relative spending for "prevention" vs. "remediation." Again the Finance project provides a managerie of possible analyses.

(f) **Circulate for review; revise; publish, and distribute:** The credibility of these documents is enormously important. Review process, both formal and informal can help catch any problems with accuracy or completeness.

(g) **Promote use in the executive and legislative branch decision making processes; promote in media the work.** The best Family and Children's budgets are conceived in terms of their utility in the budget process. Budgeting is about producing choices for decision makers, and Family and Children's budgets can produce new choices about investing in children and families. The public debate about these choices can also be of interest to the media. Think about a press strategy to go with the report's release, and what kinds of followup stories can be encouraged or produced.

(h) **Debrief process and plan for next edition.**

(3) Now to the political and organizational dimensions of producing a Family and Children's budget.

(a) **Getting started:** There is no formula here. Someone must think this is a good idea and be willing to provide leadership. This can come from inside or outside of

government. Within government it can come from elected officials or operating departments. The best processes are ones with a wide array of sponsors, including both the executive and legislative branches, the business community, the advocacy community and the provider community. Sponsorship also means financial support. It does not take a lot of money to produce a family and children's budget. Usually between one half time and one full time position is all that is required in terms of paid staff. Additional costs include some consulting costs on design/analysis and the costs of composition and printing. The other resources come from the contributed time of those who provide the data, and help with oversight and analysis. In some cases, the private sector has helped with funding in the first years (The California Endowments support of the Sonoma County Children's Budget produced by Family Action of Sonoma County, The United Way's support of the San Diego "Children's Future Scan.") More often, the budgets are produced by government staff (as in the case of Kansas, Maryland, Contra Costa County California, San Francisco and Los Angeles California).

(b) Assemble partners and staff: Three things are important here. First the work will benefit greatly from a respected steering committee. Second it will be necessary to get cooperation from the keepers of the data. A good steering committee can help. And third, the work will require the talents of an unusual person with the combination of skills in financial analysis and diplomacy.

(c) Create realistic expectations about what can be accomplished in the first year: This should probably be listed first. It is quite common for organizations new to this effort to overpromise what can be accomplished in one year. Family and Children's budgets are a multi-year undertaking, and it will usually take two or three iterations to get it right. It is also important to remember that family and children's budgets can (and should) grow in sophistication. The Finance Project paper puts forward the notion that there are three stages in the development of a family and children's budget. Stage I (budget by program inventory) is an aggregation of the program line items associated with spending for children and families as they are represented in the current operating budget. Stage II (budget by function) builds on stage I by presenting spending across agency and categorical lines by function. By "function" we mean groupings of related services within the overall family and children's service system, such as child care, health, out of home care or the more difficult summation of "prevention" vs. "remediation services. Stage III budgets (budget by result) build on stages I and II by presenting spending and associated strategies by result (e.g. children ready for school, safe and stable families, clean environment, prosperous economy etc.) (Excerpted from "A Guide to Developing and Using Family and Children's Budgets," Finance Project, 1998.)

2.17 How do we create a Cost of Bad Results report and what do we do with it?

The Short Answer

1. Base your analysis on the answers these two questions:

Question 1: What are the expenditures we want to go down in the long run because we need less of it?

Questions 2: What expenditures are embedded in these that are today devoted to reducing the cost of bad results?

2. Follow the following steps:

- Create an inventory of all spending for children and families. If you have a good stage I family and children's budget, you can use this.
- Categorize all spending according to question 1: spending we want to go down in the long run because we need less of it. Include whole programs wherever possible.
- Analyze the component expenditures of each program which fits with question 1. Look for those program components which are explicitly devoted to reducing long term cost.
- Add to this second category any expenditures for whole programs which are devoted to reducing long term need for remediation.
- Produce answers to these questions for as many years of history as possible in order to create two trend lines: one for question 1 and one for question 2.

Full Answer

<p>Tools</p> <p>1. The Cost of Unwanted Results What is it?; Why do it?; How to do it?; What do we do with it once it's done?</p>
<p>Stories</p>
<p>Tips</p> <p>1. Don't fall into the prevention - remediation trap 2. Never try at the start of the work to divide programs in to prevention programs and remediation programs. Instead use the questions at the beginning of the Short Answer. You can, if necessary, later label the answers to these questions "remediation" and "prevention." 3. Start with the total cost of bad results to avoid credibility problems that come with arbitrarily splitting costs by "bad result."</p>
<p>Advice from:</p>
<p>Organizational Resources</p>
<p>References</p> <p>1. "A Guide to Developing and</p>

(1) The purpose of a cost of bad results analysis is to make the economic case for investments in prevention. The magnitude of the total costs associated with poor conditions of well-being, suggest that it is possible to reduce (or in the short term slow the growth) of these costs with prudent investments. This is the business side of results accountability. And it is useful to involve the business community in thinking about and planning this part of the work.

Using Family and Children's Budgets," and "A Strategy Map for Results-Based Budgeting," available from the [Finance Project's website](#).

2. "Toward and Economics of Prevention: Illustrations from Vermont's Experience," Cornelius D. Hogan and David A. Murphey, [Finance Project](#), December, 2000.

(2) Cost of Bad Results for specific conditions: There is a significant literature on the costs of specific conditions such as drug addiction, the cost of a teen pregnancy, the cost of a child entering foster care or the long term cost of welfare dependency. In foster care, for example, the average length of stay can be used to calculate the average total cost of foster care per child. The average number of children per family entering care can be used to calculate the potential cost avoidance of keeping a family together. These estimates can be used in an economic model to calculate the potential financial effects of family preservation services. We know from these analyses, that the key to financially effective family preservation services is the effectiveness of targeting. That is, the program must in fact serve families whose children would otherwise end up in out of home care. Many family preservation programs have created the appearance of success by serving the wrong families. A 100% rate of preventing entry into foster care can be achieved in this way. It turns out that family preservation programs need only be accurately targeted about 35% of the time to break even financially. Costs of drug addiction are based on tracking studies of later usage of deep end services (like welfare, food stamps, medicaid etc.) and social costs of associated crime, prosecution and incarceration. Costs of a typical teen pregnancy can be similarly computed. These kinds of analyses can be used to create a financial case for investing in prevention and early intervention services. In future updates of this guide we will include references to existing analyses

(3) A more powerful analysis can be created by considering the TOTAL cost of bad results. There are several reasons why the total cost of bad results is the place to start. First of all, there is no problem of allocation. If you try to create the cost of a particular bad result you must take each deep end cost pool and decide how much of that cost pool to allocate to the particular results. So, for example, it is necessary to decide how much of welfare or medicaid costs are associated with unhealthy births as opposed to family self sufficiency. It is an arbitrary exercise, prone to error and more importantly open to justified criticism about any allocation method chosen. However if the total cost of bad results is developed, then the allocation problem disappears. Whole programs can be added without objection. The entire juvenile justice program from Judges to probation workers is a cost of bad results.

The second reason for considering the total cost of bad results is cost shifting. It does no good to simply shift the costs of remediation from one system to another. There is a long history of one child serving system saving money by getting another child service system to bear the cost. When the cost of bad results is considered in total, then it is clear that such cost shifting does not change the total cost of bad results. This includes cost shifting into the future. It is possible to save money today on services for young children and their families at the expense of increased need for remedial services in later years.

The third reason for considering the total cost of bad results is the simple financial fact that costs of prevention and the associated saving often show up in different parts of the budget. So an investment in recreation services for adolescents may produce financial benefits in the juvenile justice system. Unless these systems are considered together, then the prevention investment looks like a bad financial decision. Only when the budgets of prevention and remediation services are considered together, can the real financial case for investments in prevention be made.

(3) So how do you create a cost of bad results analysis? The methodology you use must answer of these two long winded questions:

- 1. What are the expenditures we want to go down in the long run because we need less of it?**
- 2. What expenditures are embedded in these that are today devoted to reducing the cost of bad results?**

There are several reasons why these questions must be asked in exactly this way. By labeling some expenditure as part of the cost of bad results, we are not saying that this expenditure is not needed, is not wisely spent or that the recipients of the funded services are not deserving. We are simply saying that our society would be a better place if there were fewer people who needed such services. There may be a very real need for such expenditures as foster care and juvenile justice to go up in the short run. The purpose of cost of bad results analyses are to show that our long term financial interests are best served by investments which will reduce the long term need for remedial services. By phrasing the question as stated above, both problems are solved.

.....The second question is a way to avoid the "prevention trap." The prevention trap occurs when a government budgeting process seeks to categorize all services as either prevention or remediation. People realize that services labels prevention will look better and may receive more funding, and so every program seeks to be labeled as a prevention program. "The prison is a prevention program because it prevents recidivism." This is a useless and self-defeating process. By first acknowledging that some expenditures, like prisons, should go down in the future because we need less of it, there is no particular stigma attached to that program. We are simply stating the obvious. By then asking what expenditures are embedded in the first which are devoted to reducing the long term need for these services, we phrase the prevention question in a way which actually relates to the purpose of prevention. And the answers will be much more useful pointers to potential investments.

(4) So the technical method for producing a cost of bad results analysis is derived from these two questions. In simple terms it goes like this:

- Create an inventory of all spending for children and families. If you have a good stage I family and children's budget, you can use this. If not, create a separate working inventory.**

- **Categorize all spending according to question 1: spending we want to go down in the long run because we need less of it. Include whole programs wherever possible.**
- **Analyze the component expenditures of each program which fits with question 1. Look for those program components which are explicitly devoted to reducing long term cost. (For example, the GED and job training programs in the prisons are such costs.)**
- **Add to this second category any expenditures for whole programs which are devoted to reducing long term need for remediation. This is an even more subjective judgment and you will need some criteria which can be explained and defended in the later public process. One way of examining such expenditures could be whether the absence of this program would clearly lead to later increased remedial costs.**
- **Produce answers to these questions for as many years of history as possible in order to create two trend lines: one for question 1 and one for question 2.**

(5) The total cost of bad results analysis is a cutting edge piece of work that has never been fully done .FPSI has produced a draft analysis which suggests that the U.S. total answer to question 1 exceeds \$200 billion per year. This analysis is not yet available for distribution

(6) The cost of bad outcomes is closely related to cost benefit and return on investment, matters that come up in performance measurement more often than in population accountability. The principle difficulty in cost benefit or return on investment analyses is the valuation of the benefit. In business, this matter is greatly simplified by the fact that benefits of income and profit are already quantified. In social policy, it is rare to find benefits that are easy to quantify. The clearest examples occur in programs that involve cash collections, like child support enforcement or tax collection, or any government or private sector program that operates like a business (e.g. revolving loan funds, some capital budgeting, housing development etc.) . In these programs, the return on investment is more money in the bank.

In other programs the calculation of benefits are much harder to come by. What are the benefits of child care, of respite care, of foster care? of elementary and secondary education? Valuing benefits requires that you first inventory all the possible ways in which benefits could materialize over a multi year period. And then for each possibility, create an analytic approach that could produce plausible estimates of effect. The much used (and maybe overused) Ypsilanti study of ... is a good example of this. The study tracked children who received quality early care and how they used public services (e.g. welfare) or created public cost (e.g. crime) and compared this utilization to a control group. The difference between the two becomes the benefit value. There are of course intangible benefits, but we will not address these here.

One of the purposes of the cost of bad results is to provide a practical way to shortcut the daunting challenge of quantifying social benefit. The notion is to sum all of the cost centers where benefits could accrue and treat the total cost pool as if it were a single benefit source. If the total cost of bad results could be turned away from the baseline, then the difference (in cost savings and cost avoidance) can be counted as benefit, even if cause can not be attributed.

2.18 How do we present a results-based plan to the public, to political leadership?

The Short Answer

1. Organize the presentation to match the results accountability thinking process. Start off with the results we want, then experience, then indicators, then baselines, then the story behind the baselines, the partners, our what works strategy, and what we propose to do.
2. Include a brief (one page) summary of the thinking process that can be read and understood by a lay audience.
3. The plan should present action items which can proceed without any further deliberation.
4. The plan should be designed so that it can be updated easily to reflect new thinking.

Full Answer

(1) The key to presenting a results based plan is to keep it simple enough so that the basic logic of the thinking process shows through. This means

- Organizing the presentation to match the thinking process. The plan should start off with the results we want, then experience, then indicators, then baselines, then the story behind the baselines, the partners, our what works strategy, and what we propose to do.
- A corollary of number 1 is that there must be a brief (one page) summary of the thinking process that can be read and understood by a lay audience.
- The plan should present action items which can proceed without any further deliberation or approval and those that require approval in one form or another
- The plan should be designed so that it can be updated easily to reflect new thinking about any of the steps along the way (indicators, story behind the baselines, what works etc.) And

Tools
1. Imaginary press conference script for reporting progress on a 10 year effort to improve the well-being of young children and their families 2. A script for introducing a results-based budget by a department director
Stories
Tips
1. No jargon! 2. Create a one page version.
Advice from:
1. Advice from Gary Stangler and Cornelius Hogan
Organizational Resources
References

the plan should present or suggest a reporting format to track implementation progress.

(2) There are of course other components of results accountability that are not listed above, specifically the data development agenda and the research agenda. These can be references in the main presentation or left to later discussion in the body of the plan and appendices. It may turn out in some circumstances that the data development agenda requires considerable prominence in the discussion because of the lack of good data.

(3) Since the plan is about action, about turning curves, then the opportunity to present the plan is also an opportunity to galvanize support for action and to attract new partners. This opportunity should not be squandered. The plan and its presentation strategy should be thought of like a political campaign, with care given to media, message, timing, potential allies and likely criticism. And there should be a series of public events which bring people in, make them feel good about participating, and celebrate accomplishments. All this must be done without sacrificing the underlying discipline of thinking about results as a data driven action process.

(4) Good examples of this kind of presentation can be found in many Family and Children's budgets (2.16). Other good examples include the Alaska Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse 5 Year Plan, the Action Plan developed by the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council as companion to the report card, and the plan for making all children ready for school, presented to the Maryland Joint Legislative Committee on Children Youth and Families. (Exact citations pending).

2.19 How can we get more flexibility in the use of the money in the service system?

The Short Answer

1. Fund flexibility is a means to the ends of better results for children, adults, families and communities. It is not an end in itself.

2. Create individual child case level flexibility through wrap around: Take all the money that is being spent on a child by the various service systems. Allow the service team to buy any plan of service for the child with the combined funding, provided that the total expenditure does not exceed some percentage of the original total.

3. Combine discretionary money into a funding pool: This is the most common kind of funding pool and the least useful. The small advantages that can be gained are the ability to fund joint projects and align the use of money for maximum impact.

4. Negotiate a core dollar deal: A more powerful form of fund pool involves the pooling of core dollars, such as base funding for child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health or education. The principal reason to combine core dollars into a funding pool is to allow the combination of prevention and remediation funding. This brings with it a natural incentive to save on remediation so that savings can be captured and reinvested in prevention. Such deals can be structured around the answers to six questions: Who is accountable? For what results? With what money? With what standards and safeguards? With what risks, rewards, and penalties? For what period of time?

5. Consider creating a "unified budget," as a special variation of core dollar deals. No funds are physically combined. Each agency retains full control of the funds in question. But an oversight body of some sort creates and manages a unified budget which displays the full range of funding from prevention, early intervention to deep end expenditures. By considering this range of expenditures AS A WHOLE, the oversight group can begin to make the connections between expenditures that allow investments in prevention to be tracked, and savings in remediation to be captured, retained and reinvested.

Tools

1. [Trading Outcome Accountability for Fund Flexibility: The Deal](#)

Stories

1. Iowa Decategorization (see Resources and References) www.dhs.state.ia.us
 2. Maryland Montgomery County www.collaborationcouncil.org

Tips

1. Negotiate, do not impose or mandate, fund flexibility deals.
 2. Consider "interest-based" negotiation as the win-win model to use.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

1. "Trading Outcome Accountability for Fund Flexibility," can be read at the [FPSI website](#)

Full Answer

(1) "If only we had a funding pool, all would be right with the world." There is widespread lack of understanding of how fund flexibility can and does work. The value of fund flexibility structures, including fund pools, are all dependent on the details of construction. There are a few simple things to keep in mind:

- **Fund flexibility is a means not an end. The purpose of fund flexibility is to improve results for children and families. When fund flexibility becomes an end in itself, the work can actually be counterproductive, leading to turf battles and unnecessary conflict among partners who need to work together.**
- **Program must drive financing, not the other way around. The design of fund flexibility structures must be supportive of good program practice. If it's not, don't do it.**
- **Fund flexibility does not mean a lessening of accountability. It means substituting one form of accountability for another. The new form of accountability is based on results, not procedural compliance. But in no case should traditional accounting controls on misuse of funds be lost.**

(2) Here are four things you can do or rather four things that can be done. The actual doing of any of these depends on the cooperation of many players, any one of which can block the work.

- **Individual child case level flexibility through wrap around: This is a well established technique pioneered in Alaska in the early 1980's, and now widely practiced. The concept is simple. Create a service team for a child. Take all the money that is being spent on a child by the various service systems. Allow the service team to buy any plan of service for the child with the combined funding, provided that the total expenditure does not exceed some percentage of the original total. It is often possible for case teams to buy much better plans of care and support in the child's home and/or community for less total cost, sometimes as low as 60%. This is possible for two reasons. First, the case team is permitted to buy services which the individual service systems can not buy. The team can actually create individualized service that the child or family need to keep the child in home and/or community. Second, the combined purchasing power of the team and the elimination of duplicative case management allows less money to buy more effective service. This practice is particularly effective in returning children from expensive out of state care.**
- **Combine discretionary money into a funding pool: This is the most common kind of funding pool and the least useful. If the money was discretionary before it entered the pool, there is no real gain in flexibility. Fights about allocation of discretionary money just changes venue. The small advantages that can be gained are the ability to fund joint projects and align the use of money for maximum impact.**
- **Negotiate a core dollar deal: A more powerful form of fund pool involves the pooling of core**

dollars, such as base funding for child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health or education. Pooling core funding in any form is a much more complex task, since core dollars support mandated services and there are many strings attached to, not just the use, but the administration of such funds. The principal reason to combine core dollars into a funding pool is to allow the combination of prevention and remediation funding. This brings with it a natural incentive to save on remediation so that savings can be captured and reinvested in prevention. This is the concept behind managed care, although the introduction of the profit motive shifts the logic to: save on remediation to increase profit, not prevention. Core dollar deals must be negotiated to balance the many interests and restrictions on fund use. Such negotiated deals can be structured around the answers to six questions:

1. Who's accountable?
2. For what results?
3. With what money?
4. With what standards and safeguards?
5. With what risks rewards and penalties?
6. For what period of time?

Such deals have been successfully created in Iowa, Vermont and Maryland. The creation of fund flexibility deals is discussed in more detail in "Trading Outcome Accountability for Fund Flexibility," which can be read on the [FPSI website](#).

- Consider creating a "unified budget," as a special variation of core dollar deals. This is an important alternative to the concept of a fund pool. No funds are physically combined. Each agency retains full control of the funds in question. But an oversight body of some sort creates and MANAGES a unified budget which displays the full range of funding from prevention, early intervention to deep end expenditures. For example, in juvenile justice, the range might go from neighborhood recreation services to mentoring programs to diversion programs to non-secure detention to secure detention to adult detention. In the combined out of home care system (child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and education) the range of funding might go from respite care and family support services to family preservation to family foster care to group and institutional care. By considering this range of expenditures AS A WHOLE, the oversight group can begin to make the connections between expenditures that allow investments in prevention to be tracked, and savings in remediation to be captured, retained and reinvested. This is the concept behind the Iowa Decategorization program, one of the country's oldest successful fund flexibility programs.

(3) One powerful way of thinking about the notion of fund flexibility is the "Front Room Back Room" view of the service system. In the front room, people get what they need, based on what they need, not all the crazy categories we have created over the last 50 years. In the back room we categorize the hell out of them so we can claim every conceivable dollar to pay for what's in the front room. The challenge for fiscal folks is to rearrange the back room so that the front room is possible.

2.20 How do we oversee the implementation of a results-based plan?

The Short Answer

Create a regular (i.e. monthly or quarterly) review process which considers:

- Are the elements of the plan being implemented on time? A common format for an implementation plan lists the tasks (or [goals and objectives](#)) down the leftmost column, and then tracks across the top: description of the task, primary and secondary responsibility, start and completion dates, and a column for reporting status.
- Are they being done well? A set of "headline" performance measures should serve as the basis for regular reporting, review of performance, and agreement on changes in practice as necessary.
- Is the plan making a difference? Does the plan need to be changed? The basic notion of results accountability is a continuing process to do what it takes to turn the curve on the well-being of children and families. This requires a structured and thoughtful process to assess overall progress and make midcourse corrections.

Tools
1. Progress Report Prototype
2. Implementation Plan Format Prototype
3. Families and Children Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

Full Answer

The answer to this question depends a lot on who is overseeing implementation.

There are at least four basic questions to consider in any effort to oversee this, or any, plan:

- (1) Are the elements of the plan being implemented on time?
- (2) Are they being done well?
- (3) Is the plan making a difference? Does the plan need to be changed?

(1) Are the elements of the plan being implemented on time? This is an old and well established part of management practice. If the plan provides the basic information on who is to do what when

and with what resources, then it is a straightforward matter to check on which pieces are complete and are they on time. A common format for an implementation plan lists the tasks (or [goals and objectives](#)) down the leftmost column, and then tracks across the top: description of the task, primary and secondary responsibility, start and completion dates, and a column for reporting status.

(2) Are they being done well? This is a matter of performance measurement and performance accountability. For the plan as a whole and for each element of the plan, there should be a set of "headline" performance measures. These then serve as the basis for regular reporting, review of performance, and agreement on changes in practice as necessary.

(3) Is the plan making a difference? Does the plan need to be changed? The basic notion of results accountability is a continuing process to do what it takes to turn the curve on the well-being of children and families. There will always be more to consider and more to do. No good plan is static. The process is not complete unless there is a regular (i.e. monthly or quarterly), structured and thoughtful process to assess overall progress and make midcourse corrections. This kind of change can not be fully delegated from the original decision making body. Substantive changes must be considered and decided with the same authority that established the plan in the first place.

(4) Three tools to consider:

- [A standard format for tracking plan implementation](#)
- [A standard format for structuring progress reporting](#)
- [An agenda for periodic review which tracks the original results accountability thinking process](#)

2.21	How do we report on progress?
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The Short Answer

Progress reports may address one or more of the following:

- **An actual turning of one or more curves: This is the most rare kind of event to report - when it is possible to see a change in direction away from the baseline.**
- **An improvement in client results which contributes to turning the curve(s) - the effects of a program, agency or service system on the well-being of clients or customers**
- **An accomplishment - a task or set of tasks in the implementation plan that has been completed,**
- **An anecdote - a story of how a specific person's life actually got better.**

Full Answer

(1) There are four types of progress that can be reported

- **An actual turning of one or more curves: This is the most rare kind of event to report - when it is possible to see a change in direction away from the baseline.**
- **An improvement in client results which contributes to turning the curve(s): This is a report on the effects of a program, agency or service system on the well-being of clients or customers, as a contribution to turning the curve on population well-being**
- **An accomplishment: This is a report on a task or set of tasks in the implementation plan that has been completed, like the opening of a family center or the issuance of an RFP. Or it may include some other achievement or**

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress Report Prototype 2. Imaginary press conference script
Stories
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep it simple. 2. No jargon. 3. No excuses.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

event outside the implementation plan, like an award or recognition in the press.

- **An anecdote: A story of how a specific person's life actually got better. Do not underestimate the power or importance of this kind of reporting. For most audiences, this is the most "real" part of any report. It makes the connection back to how we experience well-being. It brings to life the meaning of data on progress. And it reminds us of why we are doing this work.**

The attached progress report format was drafted for use by the Los Angeles County Task force on Self Sufficiency, but could be adapted for use by almost any population results effort.

(2) Public reporting of progress often involves making presentations to oversight bodies and may also involve press conferences from time to time. The attached prototype press conference was drafted for the UCLA Proposition 10 paper as a way to illustrate the kinds of progress that could be reported after a 5 or 10 year effort. This picture of what could be accomplished could also serve as a statement of ends, used to drive the results thinking process.

(3) An evaluation report is another kind of report on progress. These usually help answer questions about whether and to what extent individual programs or projects are working to affect client results for the better. Evaluation conclusions are often mixed, and presentations should go beyond a simple win/lose grading, to address the implications for choosing effective strategies to improve results for children and families.

The Short Answer
(from [1.1](#))

1. Choose among the many approaches to performance measurement.

Make sure it makes sense to you, make sure it is useful to managers, make sure it addresses the most important measures, those that tell you whether and to what extent clients/customers are better off, and make sure it get you from talk to action quickly and with minimal paper.

2. Whatever system you use should:

- Start with ends, work backward to means. What do we want? How will we recognize it? What will it take to get there?
- Be clear and disciplined about language.
- Use plain language, not exclusionary jargon.
- Keep accountability for populations separate from accountability for programs and agencies.
- Identify end conditions of well-being for populations (results or outcomes) for children, adults, families and communities.
- Identify end conditions of well-being for customers or clients (customer or client results)
- Use data (indicators and performance measures) to gauge success or failure against a baseline.
- Use data to drive a disciplined business-like decision making process to do better.
- Involve a broad set of partners.

Tools

1. [The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability](#)
2. [A Step by Step Schematic](#)
3. [Turn the Curve Exercise Instructions](#)
4. [Quantity / Quality vs. Effort / Effect](#)
5. [4 Quadrants link to other performance measurement terms](#)
6. [Story Analysis Exercise](#)
7. [The Matter of Cause and Effect](#)

Stories

1. [San Mateo County's Outcome-Based Management System Aligns Program Performance Measures, County Budget and Community Results.](#)

Tips

1. Keep it simple.
2. Make it useful to managers. "If it's not useful, don't do it."
3. Show leadership at the top.
4. Behave your way into thinking, rather than think your way into behaving.
5. Use the 7 Questions to structure supervisory conferences.
6. Use the 7 Questions at staff meetings. Have one person present a program, unit or service at each meeting. Periodically use the staff meeting for all staff to answer the questions for the operation as a whole.

Advice from:

- Get from talk to action as quickly as possible.

3. The approach to performance measurement discussed in this guide breaks with past work in a number of ways.

- It skips weeks, months and sometime years of analysis, flow charts, program descriptions and other "preparation," and goes directly to the identification of performance measures. Most people know their program well enough to identify performance measures right away without weeks or months of preliminaries. See [Get to the Point Planning](#).
- The process sorts the measures into common sense plain English categories (How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?). The 3 to 5 most important "headline" performance measures are chosen from among the data you already have.
- And these measures are then used in a disciplined process to engage partners and get from talk to actions necessary to improve performance. The entire process is summarized in [7 questions](#), and a first pass at it can be [accomplished in about an hour](#), not weeks months or years. Every iteration of the 7 questions improves the action plan.

1. [Reyna Farrales, Deputy County Manager, San Mateo County](#)

Organizational Resources

References

1. "A Guide to Developing and Using Performance Measures in Results-based Budgeting," can be read on line at the [Finance Project website](#)

Full Answer

(from [1.1](#))

(1) Choices: First let it be said that there is no right or wrong way to do performance measurement work. There are many different approaches to performance measurement which have been written about, presented and used over the years. As you think about which of these many approaches to use for your organization, you need to be a good consumer. Think about which approach works best. You have choices. Don't just take the first thing that comes along. Having said that, it is also true that not all approaches are equally good. There is along history in this work of doing performance measurement "for show," and generating a lot of useless paper in the process.

Here are some criteria to think about as you scan the field for what to do.:

Does it make sense: First and foremost does the approach make sense to you. Use your common sense in making this judgement. Can you explain it to others in your organization. Do you think it will make sense to them?

Is it useful? If it is not useful don't do it. Beware the processes that produce a lot of useless paper. The process should use concise understandable formats that actually help managers manage programs. If the material is useful to managers it will be useful to everyone else in the system (budget people, senior management staff, legislators

etc). If it doesn't it won't.

Does it address client or customer well-being. The most important performance measures are measures of whether and to what extent your clients customers are better off. The method you use should place this kind of measurement at the center of the work and not take forever to get there.

Does it get you from talk to action: This should not be an academic exercise. The purpose of performance measurement is to improve performance. Does the method you choose help you do that? This means a disciplined and common sense way of getting from identifying performance measures to actually using them to do better.

(2) Performance Accountability Thinking Process:

Here is a straightforward approach to performance measurement which meets the above criteria.

Be clear about what program or agency is being measured. The first order of business in picking the right performance measures is being clear about what program or agency is being measured. This is a "fence drawing" problem. First we draw a fence around the thing to be measured. It could be a program, like child care center , or a component of a program with some organizational identity, like infant child care. Or it could be an entire organization or agency, like a residential treatment center, or a department of social services. Or it could be an entire service system, like the entire child welfare or child care service system, involving many agencies and their programs.

Next we ask ourselves a few questions about what's inside the fence. Who are our customers? Customers include the direct recipients or beneficiaries of the service. But they also include others who depend on the program's performance, like related programs and partners. For example, the customers of child care program include the children of the program, but also the parents of those children, and also the local elementary school where many of these children will enter kindergarten. It is important to consider the full range of customers, because, just like in business, success depends on doing a good job for your customers.

Consider the different types of performance measures and choose the most important.

Not all performance measures are of equal importance. All performance measures fit into one of four categories, derived from the intersection of quantity and quality vs. effort and effect.

	QUANTITY	QUALITY
EFFORT	<p><u>What did we do?</u> How much service did we deliver?</p>	<p><u>How well did we do it?</u> How well did we deliver service?</p>
EFFECT	<p><u>Is anyone better off (#)?</u> How much change for the better did we produce</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off (%)?</u> What quality of change for the better did we produce?</p>

See the attached chart which shows how the 4 Quadrants account for all the standard terms used in past and present performance measurement systems.

The most important measures tell us whether our clients or customers are better off as a consequence of receiving the service (quality of effect: lower right quadrant). We call these measures "client or customer results" These are measures which gauge the effect of the service on peoples lives.

Usually, in programs which directly deliver services to people client results have to do with four dimensions of "better-offness." Skills, attitude, behavior and circumstance. Did their skills improve; did their attitude change for the better, did their behavior change for the better, is their life circumstance improved in some demonstrable way? So, for example, if you are overseeing a child care program, you would want to measure such things as the percent of children with basic literacy skills (skills), the percent of children with a positive self image (attitude); the percent of children exhibiting disruptive behavior (behavior) and the percent of children who are up to date on their immunizations, and the percent who go on to succeed in 1st grade (circumstance).

The second most important measures are those that tell whether the service and its related functions are done well (quality of effort: upper right quadrant). These measures include such things as timeliness of service, accessibility, cultural competence, turnover rate and morale of staff. These measures can be used by managers to steer the administration of the program. If things are late, they work to make them timely. If turnover is high, they work to retain staff.

Don't accept lack of control as an excuse. Now the first thing you're going to say is "Wait a minute. What does child care have to do with whether or not children are up to date on immunizations? This

is a good example of a performance measure where child care has very little control over whether the circumstance improves. Child care can make a contribution to the immunization status of its clients. Quality child care can help parents and children understand the importance of regular preventive health care and can help parents understand and access the health care system. But child care by itself can not do these things. So isn't it unfair to track immunization rates for children in care?

If you look at the other measures listed for child care (literacy skills, self image, disruptive behavior, first grade success) you will notice that these measures are also beyond the capacity of the child care provider to completely control. And the point is that all programs performance measures are affected by many factors beyond the particular program's control. This lack of control is usually used as an excuse for not doing performance measurement at all. Turnover rate, staff morale, you name it is "beyond my control".

In fact, the more important the performance measure (e.g. children successful in 1st grade) the less control the program has over it. This is a paradox at the heart of doing performance measurement well. If control were the overriding criteria for performance measures then there would be no performance measures at all. The first thing that we must do in performance measurement is get past the control excuse, and acknowledge that we must use measures we do not completely control.

Create a performance accountability system useful to managers. - one that takes this control paradox into account. We do this in three ways. First, we ask managers to assess their performance on these measures - not on the basis of some absolute standard - or on how other providers are doing - but on whether they are doing better than their own history. We do this using the same technique used for cross community indicators: the notion of baseline. For each performance measure we ask managers to present a baseline of the history of their program's performance, and where their performance is headed. We ask them to do better than their own baseline.

This is the central way in which businesses use data. How are we doing compared to our own history. Later when you have the sophistication and the data, you can begin to develop and use comparisons to the performance of other similar providers with similar mixes of easy and hard cases. And later still, we can compare to standards, when we know what good performance looks like.

In some services, like child care, we have progressed to the point where we have standards for the first type of performance measure above. In child care we know what quality service delivery looks like. We have standards for staffing ratios, percent of staff with certain qualifications, timeliness of service, safety etc.

Next we ask managers to think about the partners who have a role to play in doing better. Programs cannot produce the most important results for customers by themselves.

And, finally managers must ask and answer: "What works to improve performance?" Out of this thinking we ask managers to present their best thinking about what needs to be done.

This thinking process is summarized in the [Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability](#).

These questions should be asked and answered at every intersection between a supervisor and a subordinate throughout the system.

.....(3) "Get to the Point" Planning

Excerpt from "A Guide to the Developing and Using Performance Measures." (revised)

"Notice how we skip right past mission, vision, values, purpose, goals, objectives, logic models, and flow charts and go right to performance measures. Now this goes against the orthodoxy of the planning and budgeting profession, but it is possible and even desirable to do this. First, it gets people into the work right away. Second, it gets us past the tyranny of planning systems which decree that the work is linear and that program measurements must somehow be derived from higher level statements of purpose. Baloney.

There is no reason to start with agency mission. It can, in fact, be argued that, by working down from results and up from programs, agency mission statements become a byproduct of this work. Mission statements and their attendants, retainers and attorneys help articulate why the agency exists - how it contributes to improving results - and generally how it goes about doing this. But there is no reason to wait for the perfect articulation of mission before getting about the business of selecting performance measures.

You can go back and do all the mission(ary) stuff later if you want. It is probably a good idea for agencies to be able to state what they are about in a few phrases. But it is unnecessarily time consuming and burdensome to try to develop performance measures from these statements, as if it is a matter of mathematical derivation. Unless you are thinking of creating a brand new agency, most people who face performance measurement challenges have programs that need performance measurement in practical forms right now.

Think about it this way: results accountability tells us whether a program should exist or not as part of our larger strategy to improve ("turn the curve") on child and family well-being. Performance measurement picks up at this point; takes as given that the program needs to be there, and moves on to the next step of answering whether it's working or not.

"Traditional" planning systems spend an inordinate amount of time before people actually get to talk about how to measure performance. By going straight to the business of selecting performance measures, we ease the frustration - and associated cynicism - which goes with complex planning processes. We also go to the heart of what may be the benefit of performance measurement, namely a disciplined way to use data in the day-to-day management of programs. In the same way that processes can be both top/down and bottom up, we might think about this approach as both outside/in and inside/out.

Another benefit of this four part system is its simplicity, and (arguable) common sense. Many performance measurement systems suffer from the creation of so many special terms and variations on special terms that it is hard to keep them straight. (Ten or more types of performance measures are not uncommon.) Some of this problem derives from the fact that these systems often do not distinguish results and indicators from performance measures at the beginning, and create unnecessary complexity trying to keep this straight. Another related problem comes from an

attempt to strictly define how many "levels" there are to a performance system. Many performance systems call performance measures by different names at different levels of the organization. This doesn't work well because there are varying numbers of organizational and programmatic layers in different organizations. In the four-quadrant approach, we have a single framework which is repeated, in more or less the same way, through as many levels as exist in a given organization."

.....(4) The Matter of Cause and Effect: Very often the question is asked, "How do I know how much my program contributed to improvements in client or community well-being?" The answer is complex and not entirely satisfying:

To start, chaos and complexity theory tells us that cause and effect in complex systems is difficult if not impossible to determine. Social systems, population behaviors and clients' lives are complex systems, and therefore the causes of changes in population or individual behavior (attitude or circumstance) are difficult if not impossible to know with any certainty.

The best way to know what is possible to know about cause and effect is research. The most conclusive research on cause and effect involves control groups. This kind of research can demonstrate the extent to which there is a correlation between effort and effect. Such research is a valuable tool in identifying what works and in crafting a strategy to turn a curve.

In most cases control group research is not possible. Where control groups are not possible, it is often possible to find a comparable program, population or jurisdiction. For example, you could compare your program's performance (most importantly client results) with comparable programs serving similar populations. You could compare your program's performance with the results for the general population (e.g. the repeat teen pregnancy rate for young women in the program, compared to the rate for the state, county, city or neighborhood where the program resides.) Or you could compare your program's performance to the performance of programs in other jurisdictions. If the comparisons are real, you have circumstantial evidence that your program contributed to the difference. The greater the difference the greater the implied contribution.

With regard to the general population effects of a program, it is important to remember that it is rare that any program by itself can turn an indicator curve at the population level. Population effects almost always require the combined effort of many partners. It is, therefore, almost always unfair to judge a program on the extent to which the general population indicators have changed (e.g. we should not judge a teen pregnancy prevention program serving 30 young women, by whether the county teen pregnancy rate was better than baseline.) The relationship of a program to population effects is one of contribution. This means that what the program does for its clients is its contribution to a larger strategy.

For more on this subject, see "The Matter of Evidence," which can be read at the [FPSI website](#).

3.2

How do we get people to understand the difference between results and performance accountability? (reprise)

The Short Answer

(1) Population well-being is clearly beyond the responsibility of any one organization or any one level of government. It is beyond government itself. It requires a whole range of public and private partners.

(2) Programs and agencies serve client and customer groups that are (almost always) less than the total population. It is possible to identify agency and program managers who can be held responsible.

(3) A given piece of data like "high school graduation rate" can play two different ROLES: the role of [indicator](#) and the role of [performance measure](#). This is like an actor playing two different parts; same actor, but one day Hamlet and the next day Lear. So graduation rate is one day a performance measure and the next day an indicator. (This not mean that performance measures are sometimes indicators, anymore than it means that Hamlet is sometimes Lear.)

Full Answer

(1) Population well-being is clearly beyond the responsibility of any one organization or any one level of government. It is beyond government itself. It requires a whole range of public and private partners. People can see this clearly when an example is used.

TECHNIQUE: Help a group see how population accountability is beyond any one agency, organization or government itself: Ask the group to name the potential partners who have a role to play in "All Children Being Healthy." (Or choose another result about children and families or for the entire population like "Clean Environment" or "Prosperous Economy.") Ask the group if any one of these partners can or should be held responsible for the result. Note that, in the case of "healthy children," it is common for this responsibility to be pinned on just one department, the Health Department. Now that we have a fuller list of partners we

Tools

1. [The Language of Accountability](#)
2. [An advanced view of the relationship between indicators and performance measures](#)

Stories

Tips

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

can see that this is not right. The Health Department should, perhaps, take the lead in convening the partners (around a table), and organizing the process, but can not assume full responsibility.

(2) Programs and agencies serve client and customer groups that are (almost always) less than the total population. It *is* possible to identify agency and program managers who can be held formally responsible for the performance of that program or agency.

(3) Advanced view of the relationship between indicators and performance measures: When a program or agency is small, it is not hard to distinguish the client population from the total population. But there are some times when a program (or agency's) clients are close to or the same as the total population. As a program's client population approaches the total population (of the state, county, city or community), program performance measures begin to play a double role. First they are measures of how well the program is performing. And they can be used as indicators, proxies for the well-being of the whole population.

Chart:
Advanced View
of the
Relationship
between
Indicators and
Performance
Measures

EXAMPLE 1: This most often happens in education and public health. The school superintendent and her senior staff go off on a retreat. The group discusses performance measures for the school district as an organizational entity that they are responsible for running. One of the most important performance measures is "high school graduation rate." The next day the superintendent goes down the street to the monthly meeting of the family and children's collaborative. Here, one of the population results the group has established is "all children succeeding in school," and one of the indicators is "high school graduation rate." The data for the graduation rate is playing two different roles, first as a management performance measure, and second as a proxy for the well-being of all school age children.

Note that the data element "graduation rate" is playing two different ROLES. This is like an actor playing two different parts;. same actor, but one day Hamlet and the next day Lear. So graduation rate is one day a performance measure and the next day an indicator. This not mean that performance measures are sometimes indicators, anymore than it means that Hamlet is sometimes Lear. The constant is the data. The roles are different.

EXAMPLE 2: The Public Health Department is operating a campaign to improve childhood immunizations. The campaign can be seen as a program to be managed. And as such it has performance measures. Such performance measures might include the unit cost of the vaccines or the accessibility of the service as measured by percentage of staff hours in mobile vans vs. clinics (upper right quadrant measures). Client or customer well-being can be measured (in the lower quadrants) by the number of children immunized and the percent this represents of the total population. But it can also be measured by the percentage of the total population that is immunized or the childhood disease rate for immunizable illnesses. These are total population measures which usually serve as indicators. Here they are also used

in the role of performance measure for the initiative.

(4) This double role of data helps explain why these ideas have been so mixed up together over the years. It has been quite common in past (and unfortunately many current) performance measurement efforts to hold agencies responsible for indicators. If it's "safe community" then it must be the police department. If it's "healthy children," then it must be the health department. And so forth. This has led to considerable, and well justified, cynicism about performance measures. Because the heads of these agencies can easily see that they are one of many players who must work together to do better. And yet the performance accountability system pins it on them alone. One way to deal with this in agency presentations (to the public or the legislative branch) is as follows:

Make sure every presentation has two parts: Part 1 displays the community-wide results and indicators the agency is trying to impact as part of a broad partnership. Part 2 displays the specific performance measures for the agency and its component parts.

[See the format
for a
Results-based
Budget: Volumes
I and II](#)

.....**EXAMPLE 3:** The Health Department Director's budget testimony: "We are here today to present the budget of the Healthy Department for the next fiscal year. On page one you can see at the top of the page the most important indicators of the health of our citizens in this (state, county, city). The Health Department is part of a health coalition addressing these indicators. This coalition includes the hospitals, doctors, nurses, managed care organizations, as well as schools, teachers and parents. Here's what we as a coalition will be doing in the next year to turn the curve on the indicators you see before you. And here is the Health Department's role in that effort. Some of these actions require your approval in the budget for the Department. The actions of other partners are contributed and paid for by those partners. On the lower portion of the page you can see a summary of the Department and its component divisions. Presented for each are 2 or 3 of the most important performance measures. These tell you whether that particular part of the organization is working well. We use these measures, and many others, to manage the department and work to provide the very best possible service. When we get to the budget for each division, we will show you the baselines for each of these measures, and what we propose to do to improve performance."

The very structure of this presentation separates population accountability from agency and program performance accountability. This two part structure can be used in everything from press releases to the annual report. It helps keep the department's role clear. And it helps policy makers see that if they really want to make progress on population indicators (like immunization rates, high school graduation rates, juvenile crime rates, poverty rates, etc. it will take the actions of many partners, and significant, not token, investment.

(5) Another place where the boundary between performance measures and indicators is important is the discussion of service "systems." Service systems involve many different agencies and service providers. The important thing to remember here is that these systems

provide service and have clients or customers. In other words it is possible to distinguish people in the system receiving service from those outside the system not receiving service. This means that the measures for the service system performance are performance measures. So for example, take the entire child welfare system, the rate of repeat child abuse and child neglect (that is children who come back through the system a second time) is a performance measure for the system. This is distinct from the actual population rate of child abuse and repeat child abuse, which in theory can only be gathered from population surveys and studies. Again, services system performance measurement data will often play a double role as indicators.

(6) Prevention programs: prevention programs by their nature attempt to influence the behavior or condition of an entire population before they have need to enter the formal service system. In effect their client population is an entire population. In this case client results and population results are the same thing. So prevention programs must be judged on measures which are most often used only as indicators. It is also possible to measure the effects of prevention on the much smaller group of those people “contacted” by the prevention program (e.g. those children who attended a traveling theater production on violence prevention.) This kind of measure then cleanly follows the ruled for performance measures. Prevention programs should have both kinds of measures.

(7) It would be useful to help government leaders understand the different choices that go with these two kinds of work. Most states have some version of performance measurement under way - efforts of various quality. Relatively few have population results efforts with an active process to engage communities.

(8) Is any framework that uses the word **Results** equally worth consideration by decision makers. This is what many other publications on results have done. Maybe it's a good way to **position** the organization sponsoring the publication, but there is a risk that the work will lose its conceptual center and point of view. It is necessary to be more explicit about the different kinds of results-based work. Rather than gloss over these differences, take them head on. For example:

Results based decision making includes many different types of efforts that share in common the plain language articulation of desired conditions of well-being for agency customers or population groups, the business-like use of data to drive decision making, and the development of partnerships to steer the work and contribute to its success. Not all efforts which use the word Results in fact have these characteristics. The two most important types of results-based decision making efforts are (1) those which focus inside government or private agencies to improve the performance of services provided to customers of those agencies, and (2) those more broadly based efforts which address the well-being of whole populations, like the work in many states to make all children healthy and ready to learn.

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

**3.3 What is the difference between indicators and performance measures?
How do results and performance accountability fit together?**

The Short Answer

Indicators are about <u>whole</u> populations.	Performance measures are about <u>client</u> populations.
Indicators are usually about peoples’ lives, whether or not they receive any service.	Performance measures are usually about people who receive service.
Indicators are proxies for the well-being of whole populations, and necessarily matters of approximation and compromise.	Performance measures are about a known group of people who get service and conditions for this group can be precisely measured.

Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The link between client results and population results 2. An advanced view of the relationship between indicators and performance measures
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

Full Answer

(1) Why is this important? We have a long history of holding individual agencies responsible for population well-being. No one agency, by itself can turn the curve on any indicator. It is unfair and unproductive to hold a single agency responsible. We need to reframe the way we talk about accountability for whole population results and indicators. Rather than say: “The Health Department is responsible for "all children being healthy.” We need to say “The Health department is responsible for assembling a team of public and private partners and creating a community strategy to make all children healthy.” The difference here is not just phrasing. It is the difference between having one agency to blame when things go wrong and accepting joint responsibility. It is the difference between expecting the Health Department to do it all by itself, and recognizing that this is not possible, that the contribution of many partners will be required.

(2) The disciplined distinction between indicators and performance measures [See the Language](#)

is a new idea for many people. They are used to using the word “indicator” interchangeably to describe population and program measures. Using language discipline to distinguish them, indicators are measures which help quantify the achievement of a result. Performance measures are measures of how well public and private programs and agencies are working.

(3) Here are some differences:

Indicators are about <u>whole</u> populations.	Performance measures are about <u>client</u> populations.
Indicators are usually about peoples’ lives, whether or not they receive any service.	Performance measures are usually about people who receive service.
Indicators are proxies for the well-being of whole populations, and necessarily matters of approximation and compromise.	Performance measures are about a known group of people who get service and conditions for this group can be precisely measured.

3.4	What is the relationship between performance measurement, performance accountability and evaluation?
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The Short Answer

(1) Performance *accountability* and performance or program *evaluation* both make use of performance *measures*. Evaluation is *part* of performance accountability.

(2) **Different purposes:** Evaluations provide a structured, disciplined analysis of how well a program works, so that managers and funders can make judgments about how and whether to change, continue or terminate a program and whether it is worth replicating. Evaluations sometimes tackle the challenge of differentiating the effect a program has on client outcomes from other "outside" factors.

(3) Performance accountability is a management and oversight process that makes use of evaluation findings, and many other sources of information to manage the program, track performance, report to stakeholders and improve performance.

Full Answer

They go out to parties on weekends.

Performance *accountability*, *performance measurement* and *evaluation* are all terms of art. Like other terms in this guide they do not have "standard" definitions, and different writers will define and use the terms differently.

(1) Performance *accountability* and *evaluation* both make use of performance *measures*, but evaluation is *part* of performance accountability. Evaluations provide a structured, disciplined, analysis of how well a program is working or has worked. Evaluations sometimes tackle the challenge of differentiating the effect a program has on client outcomes from other "outside" factors. Evaluations are often commissioned so that funders can make judgments about whether a program should continue to be funded, whether it should be changed, and whether it is worth

Tools
Stories
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be active, not passive, in the design and implementation of an evaluation of your program. 2. Work in partnership with the evaluator. Make sure the evaluation meets your needs. 3. Don't be cowed by all the numbers and formulas. Trust your common sense. Ask questions. 4. Be aware that different evaluators will use different language. Take the time to crosswalk to your use of language.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

replicating. Performance accountability is a management and oversight process that makes use of evaluation findings, and many other sources of information to manage the program, track performance, report to stakeholders and improve performance.

(2) The evaluation world is divided into at least two armed camps. First there are the evaluators who take their tradition from the audit world. They wear white coats. They do not "help" the program while it is operating for fear they will contaminate the findings. They pass judgment as objective outsiders. Their reports often come out two years after the program has ended telling what was wrong and why it failed. Then there are the "self-evaluation" or "empowerment evaluation" folks. They see their role as partners with the program, providing feedback and helping make midcourse corrections. They use the same statistical methods as the first group, but see evaluation as a continuous process which helps improve the chance that the program will succeed. This guide holds a distinct preference for the second philosophy. Self evaluation methods are at the heart of performance accountability. The use of data to steer programs and improve performance.

(3) Rigor: Evaluations are rigorous, designed to stand up to academic scrutiny. Accountability is a real world process, pragmatic and sometimes political, using whatever information can be obtained, going on gut instinct when no information is available, doing whatever it takes to make the program work.

(4) One time vs. ongoing data collection and reporting. Evaluations are often structured as one time events. Often evaluations produce a single report. Performance accountability, on the other hand, requires the collection and use of data on a regular basis, and regular continuous reports.

(5) Approach to data collection: Evaluation data collection is often quite detailed, to the point that it sometimes burdens the program. Performance accountability, as presented in this guide, looks first for existing data before collecting new data. And it looks for the smallest possible data set which can be used to run the program. Both can use similar data collection methods including 100% reporting and sampling. Performance accountability makes use of all data available (anecdote, hunch, instinct).

(6) Expense: Evaluations can be expensive, partly because they are often performed by consulting firms or institutions which charge a lot of money to do the work. Performance measurement and accountability can and must be done by program staff themselves. They require time, but usually less expense. Most managers should be able to answer the [7 Questions](#) on a periodic basis without new staff resources.

(7) Do you need both? Often you do. All programs need some form of performance measurement and accountability. Evaluations can take data based judgments about performance to a higher more rigorous level. They can answer in a more complete and disciplined way "Is this program worth replicating?" And often research evaluations are the only way to get concrete information on cause and effect relationships.

(8) How could I learn more about evaluation? [Here are some resources](#)

3.5 Where do we start in an organization that wants to do this?

The Short Answer

- (1) Start small. Don't do it for the whole enterprise in a single budget cycle. Try it out with your best managers. Work out the bugs so it is actually useful to them. Then...
- (2) Work from the bottom up. Grow it up through your organization.
- (3) Work from the top down. And model behavior. Use performance measurement and accountability in the interaction of the head of the organization and the next level down.
- (4) Eventually, use a common sense, minimal paper process at every intersection between a supervisor and subordinate. (See the 7 Questions) And use it in the budget process.

Full Answer

- (1) In any organization the best thing to do is to start small. Prove that something can be successful and most importantly useful and build out from there.
- (2) The history of performance measurement is that one day the chief executive comes charging out of the shower all fired up about performance measurement, gets to the office, declares that starting tomorrow every unit of the agency will have performance measures. About 3 months later you've generated a thousand pages of paper, most of it completely useless. Eventually the system collapses of its own weight, until the next executive comes charging out of the shower. Do not create a thousand pages of useless paper. Work to create one page that actually helps managers run their programs and improve its performance.

(3) Work top down and bottom up. (The following sections are taken from "A Guide to

Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability 2. Performance Measurement: A Step by Step Schematic
Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. San Mateo County's Outcome-Based Management System Aligns Program Performance Measures, County Budget and Community Results.
Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the 7 Questions to structure supervisory conferences. 2. Use the 7 Questions at staff meetings. Have one person present a program, unit or service at each meeting. Periodically use the staff meeting for all staff to answer the questions for the operation as a whole.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

Developing and Using Performance Measures."

Building a Performance Measurement System from the Bottom Up

Whatever else may be true of performance measurement systems, they almost always display too much, not too little data. Typically, for each sub-sub-program, 10 or more performance measures are shown. As we move from sub-program to program to agency levels, the number of displayed performance measures grows exponentially. We provide executive and legislative branch decision makers with a sea of data, and no particular way to sort out what is important from what is not.

While it makes sense to build performance measurement systems from the bottom up, this does not mean we must adopt the undisciplined practice of using unlimited numbers of performance measures. The first and most important feature of a good performance measurement system is the use of a common sense approach to seeing the forest for the trees.

The first task is to contain the data explosion at each step in the construction process. For each level of performance, we could identify the 2, 3 or 4 most important performance measures. Measures not selected here can and should be used, but don't need to appear in the management or budget document. The four-quadrant sorting bin can be used to help select primary measures at each step in the process.

Using this approach, each level of the performance document or budget has the same amount of performance information organized in roughly the same way. Agency X monitors its performance on 3-4 primary measures. Program X monitors its performance on 3-4 primary measures. And so forth. If you want more detail, go to the level below (or to the data identified, but not selected) In an agency with three levels (agency, program, subprogram) it works like this:

1. For each subprogram

Identify all the "candidate list" of performance measures available in the four quadrants above.

Pick the most important 2, 3 or 4 primary measures. These should generally come from the right-hand quadrants. (See section C below for additional criteria for selecting primary measures.)

Create baselines with forecasts for these measures.

2. For each program repeat this process using the performance measures of the program's subprograms as the candidate measurement list.

3. For the agency as a whole, repeat this process using the agency's program level performance measures as the candidate list.

In the course of this work it is not uncommon to find programs, and even whole agencies, for which there is very little good data. When this is the case, the data selection process is not about picking the best of good data candidates, but finding any good data candidates. There are rarely any easy answers to this problem. But it is important to proceed with development of performance measurement with what you have and work to improve the system over time. It is sometimes possible to create data, based on sampling techniques (by reading a limited number of case records, for example) as a short term substitute for later data system development.

A related problem has to do with the relative scarcity of quality measures in data system reports. Most agency data systems count quantity not quality. Here, one relatively simple suggestion might help. Consider the role of "composite" performance measures, that is, performance measures which are created by calculating the ratio of two existing quantity measures. For example, many agencies count the number of safety or compliance violations among the programs they supervise. By themselves, the raw count of violation totals don't mean much. But by calculating the ratio of program components with reported violations to total program components, a useful measure of quality can be created. Most good quality measures, whether currently reported or proposed, take the form of composite measures.

Building a performance measurement system from the top down

or a word about that rare occasion when a top-down approach makes sense

One of the most common mistakes in the use of performance measurement in management and budgeting is the tendency to implement performance measurement all at once on a grand scale. "Starting next week, every manager of every program and sub-program must begin reporting on performance." Mountains of paper are produced. Little of it is used for anything. People come quickly to resent the intrusion of these new time-consuming and largely useless tasks. And the system is eventually abandoned.

There is nothing wrong with having performance measures for every component of an agency. But consider a different way of getting there. Imagine that the agency director asked each of the people who report directly to her or him to bring a few performance measures with them to their next meeting. This could take the form of the four quadrant chart filled in with one entry in each quadrant. They could discuss three things:

What does this data tell us about performance?

What more would we like to know? (for example, comparison to last year, last month, 1, 2 or 5 year trends, maybe forecasts of performance...who knows where this will

lead?)

Are these the right/best performance measures? The four- quadrant chart could be used to add or drop performance measures in these first meetings.

This process could, over a few months, lead to the creation of a regular performance report to be reviewed at each meeting. Over time the performance measures could become the basis for agreeing on agency or even personal goals for performance (and in the most advanced scenario, could be used for performance "contracting" between the program manager and the agency head.)

By starting the process this way (or using this method to build on an existing performance measurement system), two very important messages are sent:

Performance measurement is part of day-to-day management. It is not some back-burner, humorless, tedious and irrelevant exercise; and

Top management is modeling behavior for the rest of the organization.

This is why the top-down approach makes sense in this case. This allows, even encourages, the senior management to use this same process with the people who report to them, and to build down through the organization. (This is not the way the management books tell you to do it, but it probably works better.)

Still another reason why working from the top down makes sense is that the performance measures of individual programs and subprograms should be tied to the most important performance measures for the agency as a whole. If it is done right, working top down will give people a sense of what top management sees as important, without making this an inflexible and domineering perspective.

The best work on performance measurement will be iterative, top down and bottom up. But top-down work of any sort has taken such a beating in the management literature that we sometimes don't recognize the times when it has a legitimate and important place. This is one of those times.

3.6 Where do we start in an organization that doesn't want to do this?

The Short Answer

- 1. Start small and start with what you can do without "permission."
- 2. Keep it low visibility and low risk until it is clearly useful

Full Answer

(1) The answer to this question very much depends on your position in the organization. The truth of the matter is that it is very rare to find an organization that "wants" to do performance measurement. The reasons for this can range from organization inertia to fear about losing jobs, and everything in between.

(2) If you are the chief executive: Consider this path: Don't beat people over the head with it. begin by introducing the practice in your own work. Ask for and help shape a monthly report that uses the [seven questions](#) as the basis for its presentation. Use this report in your monthly or quarterly meetings with individual senior staff to review performance and agree on actions in the next 30 days.

For those of your staff who are resistant or just don't get it, assign a coach (consultant or buddy system), send them to training or send them to a remote island. Let people see that this information actually gets used. And find ways to use the information as pointers to success stories that your public information folks can use.

At the same time, find 2 or 3 managers at the program or line level who you think are most open to new ideas. Provide support for these people again in the form of a coach or mentor. Help them set up a performance measurement structure based on the seven questions to use in managing their programs. This would include monthly or quarterly reviews both with the staff in the program and with management at the next level up.

Important: let the managers play with and adapt the forms, the structure of the system. Consider this an experiment where the purpose is to make the products practical and most importantly

Tools
1. Hammer 2. Saw 3. The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability
Stories
Tips
1. Do the work because that is what good managers do. Show it is useful. Build out from there.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

useful to the manager. In the beginning provide recognition for the process itself. Later provide recognition for actual performance improvement.

(3) After this, build out to more units of the agency, including all as soon as is practical. Then begin using the format and data in the internal budget deliberations. (This can be done for each unit as it "comes on line.") This is the final statement of importance. It has something to do with money. Important: do not let the budget process ever become the primary reason for doing this work. And do not let the budget folks add complexity to the forms or process.

(4) If you are a lonely manager or supervisor. Try it quietly and privately for your organization. Take credit for the improvements you are able to achieve. And if anyone asks, show them what you have done. If top management shows an interest in this, make them read the paragraphs above.

3.7 How do we help people identify performance measures for their program or service?

The Short Answer

There are many different ways to do this (see [3.1](#)). Here's one approach that goes directly to performance measures themselves:

All performance measures (that have ever existed for any program in the history of the universe) fall into one of four categories, derived from the intersection of [quantity and quality vs. effort and effect](#).

	QUANTITY	QUALITY
EFFORT	<u>What did we do?</u> How much service did we deliver?	<u>How well did we do it?</u> How well did we deliver service?
EFFECT	<u>Is anyone better off (#)?</u> How much change for the better did we produce	<u>Is anyone better off (%)?</u> What quality of change for the better did we produce?

In each quadrant the questions are answered with # or % data statements:

- What did we do? (e.g. # clients served, # activities performed).
- How well did we do it? (e.g. % timely actions, % complete actions, client staff ratio, staff turnover rate, unit cost).
- Is anyone better off? (# and % of clients who show improvement in skills/ knowledge, attitude, behavior or circumstance).

Tools

1. [TECHNIQUE: A Five Step Process for Identifying and Selecting Performance Measures](#)
2. [Links to other performance measurement terminology](#)
3. [Types of Performance Measures found in each Quadrant](#)

Stories

Tips

1. Always start by "drawing a fence" around the unit, program, agency, group of agencies or functions for which performance measures are to be developed.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

References

See 3.12 [How do we select the most important "headline: performance measures?"](#)

and 3.14 [What do we do with performance measures once we have them?](#)

Full Answer

What We Do # Customers served # Activities by type of activity	How Well We Do It % Customer measures % Activity-specific measures
Is Anyone Doing This? # 2 3	How Well Do We Perform These Activities? % Skills / Knowledge % Attitude % Motivation % Commitment

(1) The first step in any performance measurement work is to identify what organizational entity we are talking about. This can be thought of as a "fence drawing" exercise. We will draw a fence around the thing whose performance is to be measured. This could be an agency, a program, a subprogram or a component unit or activity of the program. The idea is simple: take a picture of the organization in whatever form it makes sense to you. Draw a line around all of it or a piece of it. And consider the performance of what's inside the fence.

(2) Service systems and systems reform and integration: Fences can also be drawn around a set of related programs or agencies that make up a service system (e.g. the out of home care system including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and education), and performance measures developed for the system as a whole. This kind of process should be among the first things done in any systems reform effort. (Note: systems reform is a means to the end of better results, not an end in itself.) For example, in discussions of service integration (as a component of reform), it would be possible to consider the following performance measures to test whether we were making progress from the client's perspective.

- Average number of workers and case plans per family in the system
- Average number of offices that clients must visit each month.
- Average number of bus changes required for clients to get to current offices.

This kind of information could be gathered on a sample basis. Baselines could be created and the performance accountability process described in this guide could be used to drive the numbers down. Performance measures can have the effect, as in this case, of giving an operational definition to an otherwise vague notion like "service integration."

.....(3) **TECHNIQUE:** Here is a five step process that's the best way to help people identify performance measures, select the most important ones and identify a data development agenda.

Step 1. HOW MUCH WE DO (Upper Left): Draw the four quadrants on a big piece of flip chart paper. Start in the upper left quadrant. First put down the measure "# of customers served." in the upper left quadrant. Ask if there are better more specific ways to count customers or important subcategories of customers, and list them. (e.g. # of families served, # of children with disabilities served etc.). Next ask what activities are performed. Convert each activity into a measure (e.g. "we train people" becomes # of people trained.) When you're finished, ask if there are any major activities that are not listed.

Step 2. HOW WELL DO WE DO IT? HOW WELL DO WE PERFORM THESE ACTIVITIES? (Upper Right): Ask people to review the standard measures for this

quadrant that apply to most if not all programs, services or activities (e.g. unit cost, staff turnover, etc.) These are shown on the "Separating the Wheat From Chaff" worksheet ([LINK HERE](#)) in the upper right quadrant under "standard measures." Write each answer in the upper right quadrant. Next take each activity listed in the upper left and ask if there are measures that tell whether that particular activity was performed well. If you get blank looks, ask if timeliness matters, if accuracy matters. Convert each answer into a measure and be specific (e.g. the timeliness of case reviews becomes "percent of case reviews completed on time" or "percent of case reviews completed within 30 days after opening."

Step 3. IS ANYONE BETTER OFF? (Lower Left and Lower Right): Ask "In what ways could clients be better off as a result of getting this service? How we would know if they were better off in measurable terms?" Create pairs of measures (# and %) for each answer (e.g. # and % of clients who get jobs above the minimum wage). The # answers go in the lower left; the % answers go in the lower right.

There are two ways to state these kind of measures: point in time and improvement over time (e.g. % of children with good attendance this report card period vs. % of children whose attendance improved since the last report card period).

This is the most interesting and challenging part of this process. Dig deep into the different ways this can show up in the lives of the people served. Explore each of the four categories of "better-offness": skills/knowledge, attitude, behavior and circumstance. If people get stuck, try the reverse question: "If your service was terrible, how would it show up in the lives of your clients?"

Look first for data that is already collected. Then be creative about things that could/should be counted and the ways in which data could be generated. It is not always necessary to do 100% reporting. Sampling can be used, either regular and continuous sampling or one time studies based on sampling. Pre and post testing can be used to show improvement in skills, knowledge or attitude. Surveys can be used which ask clients to self report improvement or benefits.

NOTE: Every performance measure has two incarnations: a lay definition and a technical definition. The lay definition is one that anyone could understand (e.g. Percentage of clients who got jobs) and a technical definition which, for percentages, exactly specifies the numerator and denominator (e.g. the number of clients who got jobs this month, divided by the total number of clients enrolled in the program at any time during the month).

Now you have filled in the four quadrants with as many entries as you can. Next we select the most important measures and a data development agenda. Here's a **SHORT CUT** way to do that:

Step 4. HEADLINE MEASURES: Identify the measures in the upper right and lower right quadrants for which there is (good) data. This means decent data is available today (or could be produced with little effort). Circle each one of these measures with

a colored marker. Ask "If you had to talk about your program with just one of these circled measures, which one would it be?" Put a star by the answer. Then ask "If you could have a second measure... and a third?" You should identify no more than 4 or 5 measures. And those should be a mix of upper right and lower right measures. These choices represent a working list of headline measures for the program.

Step 5. DATA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: Ask "If you could buy one of the measures for which you don't have data, which one would it be?" Mark that with a different colored marker. "If you could have a second measure... and a third?" List 4 or 5 measures. These is the beginning of your data development agenda *in priority order*.

(3) The longer and more thorough method for selecting performance measures involves rating each measure High Medium or Low on three criteria: Communication, Proxy and Data Power.

Communication Power: Does the performance measure communicate to a broad range of audiences? It is possible to think of this in terms of the *public square test*. If you had to stand in a public square and explain the performance of this program to your neighbors, what two or three measures would you use?

Proxy Power: Does the performance measure say something of central importance about the program (agency or service system)? Can this measure stand as a proxy for the most important things the program does?

Data Power: Do we have quality data on a timely basis? We need data which is reliable and consistent. And we need timely data so we can see progress - or the lack thereof - on a regular and frequent basis.

(4) Both methods will lead to the same list. The SHORT CUT works because the "forced choice" process leads people intuitively to think about communication and proxy power. When they do this for measures where they have data, the selected measures are the Headline Measures. When they do this for measures where they do not have data, the selected measures are the Data Development Agenda.

This process will lead to a three part list of performance measures:

Headline Performance Measures

Those 3 to 5 measures you would use to present or explain your program's performance to policy makers or to the public.

Secondary Measures

All other measures for which you now have data. These measures will be used to help manage the program. And they will often figure in the story behind the curve for headline measures.

Data Development Agenda

Measures you would like to have. These should be listed in priority order. Since data is expensive both in dollars and worker time, you must make a judgment about how far down this list you can afford to go.

The headline measures are the starting point for using data to improve program performance.

See 3.14 [What do we do with performance measures once we have them? How can we use performance measures to improve performance?](#) and succeeding questions.

(5) Several things to keep in mind here: It is best if the program or service, for which performance measures are developed, has some organizational identity. Performance accountability is about holding managers accountable for the performance of what it is they manage. If the thing to be measured has no organizational identity, then there is no person or persons who can be held accountable for its performance.

This does not mean that the thing to be measured must be a box on the organization chart or a physical unit in a single geographic location. In matrix management, for example, it can be a function that cuts across organization lines for which some person or persons has been given lead responsibility (for example budgeting or staff development, where some staff may be decentralized but the function is still managed or "lead" by someone.) It can be a program which operates in many different locations. The notion of fence drawing is flexible enough to work with any organizational structure old or new.

(5) Second thing to keep in mind: When you are trying to teach these ideas to new people start with small units which have a clear identity. Then move on to larger units and functions without physical organizational identity.

(6) Third: performance measurement starts with the idea of customers or clients. CUSTOMERS are people who can be made better or worse off by the services of the program.

Performance measurement is an easier discussion for organizational entities who can clearly identify their customers. So, for example, direct service programs like child support enforcement or mentoring will have a head start on programs or activities where this discussion is unclear.

Performance measurement of customer well-being is harder for administrative functions such as budget, personnel, general services etc. It will be necessary to spend some quality time helping these people understand/discover who their customers are. Hint: for administrative functions the customers are often the managers of the agency itself. And customer satisfaction turns out to be the most important lower right quadrant measure. (See [3.10](#))

(7) One of the best ways to teach this method is to conduct a "fishbowl" at the front of the room. Get four or five people to volunteer who know a particular program well. Position them in chairs in a small semi-circle at the front of the room, facing forward (i.e. back to everyone else). Conduct a short session (15 to 20 minutes) using the technique above. Periodically pause to ask if the larger audience has any questions. If time permits, break the larger group into groups of 6 and have them pick a program. One member of the group then leads the group through the 5 steps of the technique above. Depending on time, two or three rounds of this could be done. Debrief the large group. "What worked and didn't work about this experience? What did you learn? How many think they could lead a small group of coworkers through this thinking process?"

(8) Technical note: Some people correctly point out that client results actually have two components which parallel the difference between results and indicators at the population level, i.e. a plain language statement of client well-being (clients are self sufficient) and a measurement that describes this condition of well-being (# and % of clients who get jobs and keep them 6 months or more). In practice, these two ideas are addressed in a single step in the thinking process which asks "In what ways could clients be better off as a result of getting this service? How we would know if they were better off in measurable terms?" (step 3 above). Experience suggests that when these two questions are separated as they are (and must be) at the population level (e.g. first fully answer in plain language, then take each plain language statement and identify measures that can serve as proxy) then the process loses its common sense feel and becomes unnecessarily complicated and time consuming. One interesting and usable variation of this approach, used by the Department of Developmental Services in California, listed all client results in plain language, and then developed a set of measures for the group of client results *as a whole* (i.e. not condition by condition).

3.8	What are the differences between the 4 quadrants (upper left, upper right, lower left, lower right)?
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The Short Answer

(1) There are many classification schemes or typologies for performance measures that have used over the years. The 4 quadrant typology is a new way to account for all the different kinds of performance measures. And it can be used to diagnose other classification schemes for performance measures.

(2) Think about the quadrants in terms of the following three questions. It is possible to use these questions as the labels for the different types of performance measures, instead of jargon words like "input, output and outcome."

- How much did we do?*
(quantity of effort: upper left: least important)
- How well did we do it?*
(quality of effort: upper right: second most important)
- Is anyone better off?*
(quantity *and* quality of effect: lower left *and* right: number *and* percent:
lower right percent is most important)

(3) The most important distinction is between what we, the staff do, and whether anyone is better off - the difference between effort and effect. So the upper quadrants look at *what we do* and *how well we do it*. The lower quadrants look at *our customers and the conditions of their well-being* that our activities can affect.

(4) The second distinction is between the quantity and quality. This is the difference between *how much we do* and *how well we do it*. The left quadrants look at quantity: *how many* things got done (upper left) and *how many* customers were better off (lower left). And the right quadrants look quality: *how well* things got done (upper right) and how customers (as a group) were *better off*.

Tools
1. Performance Accountability Story Analysis
Stories
1. The Baldrige awards www.quality.nist.gov provide excellent examples of performance improvement, including all the elements of performance accountability.
Tips
1. Try using labels for performance measures that make sense to lay people, like "How much did we do?, How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?"
2. For some measures you could make the case for two different quadrants: the "How well did we do it? (upper right quadrant) or "Is anyone better off? (lower right quadrant). If it could go either place, don't get hung up. Put it one place or the other and move on. Both will be used in the next stage of work.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

Full Answer



(1) There are several different ways to explain the difference between these four types of performance measures:

Upper Left: Quantity of Effort: How much do we do? What functions do we perform? Here we typically count the number of clients served in total and by subcategory. Subcategories are usually based on client characteristics or geography. We also count activities in total and by subcategory.

Examples:

Total # of children served, # of children served aged 0 - 5

Total # of referrals taken, # of emergency referrals

Upper Right: Quality of Effort: How well do we do it? Here we typically count standard administrative measures of how well service is delivered (like client staff ratio, staff turnover, unit cost) and activity specific measures of service functions (like the timeliness or accuracy)

Examples:

Client staff ratio, client staff ratio for intensive service cases

Percentage of referrals acted on within 2 days, percentage of emergency referrals acted on within 24 hours

Lower Left and Lower Right: Quality and Quality of Effect: Is Anyone better off? In what way are our client's or customer's lives improved? The Left Quadrant is how many clients experienced this improvement. The Right Quadrant is the percentage of clients that experienced this improvement. Here we are counting what is most important about the program. What difference did it make for people? There are (at least) four ways in which people can be better off: Improved skills/knowledge, Improved attitude, Improved behavior, Improved circumstance. Each of these can be measured in (at least) two different ways, point in time (e.g. # and % of children with good attendance) or change from one time period to another (e.g. # and % of children whose attendance was equal to or better than last quarter).

Examples:

Number and percentage of clients with jobs

Number and percentage of clients who got jobs in the past month.

Each measure identified has two forms: a lay definition and a technical definition. The lay definition describes the data element in terms that non-experts can understand. The technical definition describes exactly how the data element is constructed. In the case of percentages or rates, it describes the numerator and denominator.

Examples:

Lay definition: High School Graduation Rate

Technical definition: Number of graduates at the end of the 12th grade divided by the total enrollment of 9th graders four years earlier.

(2) Consider the following example from a typical alcohol and drug abuse treatment program:

	QUANTITY	QUALITY
EFFORT	<p><u>Number of clients served</u> (lay definition);</p> <p>Number of clients in contact with the program at any time in the past month (technical definition)</p>	<p><u>Staff vacancy rate</u> (lay definition)</p> <p>Total number of vacant full time equivalent positions at the end of the month divided by the total number of full time equivalent positions funded (technical definition).</p>
EFFECT	<p><u>Number of clients off alcohol and drugs at program exit</u> (lay definition)</p> <p>Number of clients exiting the program last month who self reported no substance abuse in the prior 30 days (and not contradicted by their assigned worker) (technical definition)</p>	<p><u>Percentage of clients off alcohol and drugs at program exit</u> (lay definition)</p> <p>Number of clients exiting the program last month who self reported no substance abuse in the prior 30 days (and not contradicted by their assigned worker) divided by the total number of clients exiting the program during the last month. (technical definition).</p>

(3) Why are these distinctions so important? Here's one explanation.

The four quadrants are not equally important. The least important quadrant is the upper left where we count number of clients or number of activities. The most important is the lower right where we count the effect on peoples' lives.

(4) Here's another explanation.

Many programs are stuck in the upper left quadrant ("We served all these people. Aren't we great!)

If they are not stuck there, then they are stuck in the upper right quadrant. (We served all these people, and we did it at the with the best qualified staff and the lowest unit cost in the county. Aren't we great!) .

If they are not stuck there, then they are stuck in the lower left quadrant. (We served all these people, at a low unit cost, and we got 20 people off of alcohol and drugs.

Aren't we great!)

But 20 people off of alcohol and drugs is great if the total number you served is 25. It's not so great if the total number served is 1,000. So until you get to the lower right quadrant and put the effect on peoples' lives in proportion, you have not spoken to the bottom line effect of the program.

(5) For some measures it appears that they could go in either the upper right or upper left.

(a) First, don't worry too much about where you put these kind of measures. You are going to use all the measures from the upper right and lower right in the next phase of selecting headline measures. So put it one place or the other without spending a lot of time.

(b) One example that comes up frequently is the percentage of people completing a program. This could be a measure of how well the program is delivered (UR) or it could be a measure of some benefit to the customer in terms of skills/knowledge, attitude, behavior or circumstance. Graduation rates for high school, completion of a job training program or satisfactory completion of a service plan can be viewed this way. Generally, I allow these in the lower quadrants, provided that other measures are added that describe in what way completion of the program might improve the well-being of its graduates. So, what percentage of high school graduates go on to school or work? What percentage of job training graduates get and keep jobs? After completion of the service plan, what percentage of clients stay out of the system over the next year? And so forth.

(c) Another example comes from an effort at Ohio State University in Columbus to improve a congested traffic system and an unreliable bus service (2000 RIT/USA Today Quality Cup: USA Today 5/9/2000 www.quality.nist.gov). The Transportation and Parking Department completely overhauled the system, doubled the number of routes, bought more buses, hired more drivers, and increased parking rates as an incentive to use the buses. One benefit for customers: The length of the trip from the most remote parking lot to campus improved from 30 minutes to 7. This improvement is clearly a lower right quadrant "circumstance" benefit for the system's customers. But what about the increase in ridership, up from 1.3 million to 3.5 million? Does the fact that more people are riding the buses mean they are better off? Not necessarily. It is possible to imagine a situation where more people ride the buses but are not better off? What if the parking rate increases made parking prohibitively expensive and people rode the buses because they had no choice? If it is possible to imagine a circumstance where the numbers get better, but customers are *not* better off, then the measure probably goes in the upper right quadrant, showing a possible improvement in how well services are delivered. The decrease in time to campus from 30 to 7 minutes is an unambiguous benefit to customers.

(6) When is the mere receipt of service an indication that someone is better off? And what are the implications for selecting headline performance measures?

This question addresses an important distinction between receipt and benefit. And this distinction is an important break with the past. First some examples.

Does the fact that someone receives counseling services necessarily mean they are better off?

Does the fact that someone receives education services necessarily mean they are better off?

We can easily think of situations where someone got counseling or education services and were not better off. It might be a bad counselor or teacher, or it might be a problem with the person themselves not attending class or not taking the counseling seriously. The point here is that the mere receipt of service is not a good proxy for people being better off. We must go beyond receipt to explore, "If this services was successful, in what ways would it show up in the lives of the clients, customers, recipients? When we answer this question we come to the lower quadrants...

Now consider some other services where this difference is less clear:

High school graduation, Red cross training, emergency room treatment, transportation services, etc.

In these cases, we might reasonably conclude that the customer who gets these services is better off, than if they didn't, but not so fast. Again, can you imagine a circumstance where someone got these services and were not better off?

High school graduation: bad school or social promotion

Red Cross training: bad instructor, marginal passing grade

Emergency room treatment: understaffed service leads to preventable death

Transportation service: inconvenient service, 3 bus routes to work, but no other choice.

The reason we would consider receipt of service as a proxy for better offness is the general reputation of the service (Red Cross) or the expectation that most people receiving the service get good service and are helped, or that people would'nt use the service in the first place if they weren't better off. But we can see that any of these assumptions can mask bad service delivery and poor help or maybe actual harm to customers. So we must go beyond mere receipt of service even in these cases.

Finally we come to the third and final set of examples:

Hospice services,

Battlefield treatment of wounded,

Disaster assistance.

Two things are true about these services. In some cases the client can't "get better" (hospice)

and the receipt of service is almost all there is. Second, the service received is so desperately needed that the absence of service causes additional harm. These are the kinds of services where receipt of service may be most persuasively argued to be a good proxy for clients being better off. But even here, there are ways to go further:

Hospice service: client and family customer satisfaction

Battlefield treatment: survival rates

Disaster assistance: persons who are saved, persons who find new housing.

Conclusion: In cases where the receipt of service is prima fascia evidence of better-offness, then upper left quadrant counts of "how many people received service" (upper left) and "what percentage of need for such service is met" (upper right) should be also considered for inclusion among headline performance measures (in step 4 of the selection process above).

(7) See the [4 Quadrants link to other performance measurement terms](#)

(8) See the [TECHNIQUE: A Five Step Process for Identifying and Selecting Performance Measures](#)

3.9 What is the difference between 4 Quadrant performance measures and logic model performance measures?

The Short Answer

1. The 4 Quadrant method and logic model methods can be seen as complementary, not contradictory, approaches.

2. The 4 Quadrant model goes directly to the identification of performance measures, without a lot of preliminaries:

- What do we do? (quantity of effort = # clients served, # activities performed) (= *logic model outputs*).
- How well do we do it? (quality of effort = % timely actions, % complete actions, unit cost, etc.)
- Is anyone better off? (quantity and quality of effect = # and % of clients who show improvement in skills, knowledge, attitude, behavior or circumstance) (= *logic model outcomes*).

3. There are many different frameworks using the term "logic model." Most logic models take time to describe program components in writing (sometimes in great detail) and derive client outcomes from the following sequence:

- Inputs (usually resources like money, staff, space etc.).
- Processes (what activities the program performs) .
- Outputs (what units of work the program produces) (= *quantity of effort* - upper left quadrant).
- (Client or customer) Outcomes (what effect the program has on the lives of its clients)(= *client results or outcomes* - the lower quadrants). Sometimes this is a two step process which states client outcomes in plain language and then in terms of data statements.

Tools
1. Crosswalk from the results and performance accountability framework to the logic model framework
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

- **Goals** (the social condition to which the program contributes)(= *population results or outcomes*).

4. The corresponding component of each is highlighted. Many logic model approaches do not address "quality of effort" measures and these must be added separately.

5. The identification of performance measures, using the 4 Quadrant model, a logic model or any other model, is part of a larger process. It is the starting point for using performance measures to improve performance. See 3.14 [What do we do with performance measures once we have them? How can we use performance measures to improve performance?](#)

Full Answer

Logic Model and Theory of Change methods are related and sometimes lumped together. The following section will address them separately. Logic models are most often used for evaluation of programs. Theory of Change is a more broadly based approach that can be applied to evaluation of both programs and community-wide efforts to improve the well-being of a whole population.

[Click here for a Crosswalk from the results and performance accountability framework to the logic model framework](#)

(1) What is a "logic model?": Logic models provide a method of describing the way a program is intended to work. This is presented as a logical sequence

- from **inputs** (usually resources like money, staff, space etc.).
- to **processes** (what activities the program performs) .
- to **outputs** (what units of work the program produces) - this corresponds to *quantity of effort* - upper left quadrant).
- to **outcomes** (what effect the program has on the lives of its clients - this corresponds to *client outcomes or results* - the lower quadrants).
- to **goals** or community impacts (what contribution the program makes to larger population conditions - this corresponds to *population results*).

(2) There is a great value in the work being done under the rubric of "logic model," or "theory of change." Logic models and the results and performance accountability model presented in this guide are all, of course, "logical." And in fact both approaches are complementary. But there are important distinctions worth noting:

- (a) Logic model work is mostly about program performance and generally does not address whole population well-being. It is a performance accountability method or

program evaluation method.

(b) It works best for programs which provide a specific service or set of services. (It is often used to design program evaluations.) It is less useful for whole agencies or for parts of agencies that do not provide service (like administrative functions).

(c) Logic model thinking processes, like the United Way's approach, work in the "opposite direction" of results-based decision making and budgeting. One starts with clients, the other ends with clients.

Logic models start with program resources and then describe activities, work product outputs and finally the ways in which clients are better off, i.e. client results.

Performance accountability skips directly to "who are our clients?," then identifies client results, baselines, the story behind the baselines, partners, what works and an action plan.

These can be seen as complementary thinking processes. It would be possible to use a logic model to identify client results and then pick up with the performance accountability process from client results to action.

(d) Many program logic models do not address quality of effort (upper right quadrant) measures like staff ratio, timeliness, cultural competence etc. This must be added.

(e) Most logic models do not distinguish between the quantity (#) and quality (%) of client results. ("Our program helped get 15 people off of drugs." This number is good if the total number served was 20; and bad if the total served was 1,000. The percentage or rate shows this difference.)

(3) Logic models are particularly useful in *designing programs*, because they require you to think about the logic of how the program is supposed to work.

(4) The logic model thinking process essentially answers the question "How is this program *supposed to* affect client results?" It is the kind of test people should use in the "what works" part of the results- based decision making framework. As such it is a tool that can help test ideas about what works, and help make the best programmatic choices about how to turn the curve on client results.

(5) In some cases program staff have found it helpful to think through how a program is supposed to work (using some form of logic model) and then developing performance measures in the 4 Quadrant framework. This can sometimes help people who do not understand the concept of client outcomes and have trouble getting to the lower right quadrant measures of whether clients are better off.

See also 1.8 [How do we fit together different approaches when there is more than one approach to results and performance accountability being used in my area?](#)

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

3.10 How do we identify performance measures for administrative functions like personnel, budgeting, etc.?

-Answer Contents:**
1. [Personnel](#)
 2. [Budget](#)
 3. [Accounting](#)
 4. [Management Information Systems](#)
 5. [Research and Evaluation](#)
 6. [Facilities Management](#)
 7. [Audit](#)
 8. [Contracting](#)
 9. [Counsel/Attorneys office](#)
 10. [Director's Office](#)

The Short Answer

1. For each administrative activity, identify the measures (in the upper right quadrant) that describe how well that activity is performed. These usually have to do with timeliness (e.g. % of invoices paid in less than 30 days, average time to fill a vacancy), accuracy (% of paychecks requiring correction/adjustment) or compliance with standards (e.g. % of repeat audit findings).

2. For most administrative functions, customer satisfaction is the most important measure of whether customers are better off (lower right quadrant measures). Administrative functions usually help their clients by making it easier for them to do their jobs. Look for measures like % of customers who report that the unit was "very helpful" in meeting the staffing needs of the agency, or % of customers who report that the contracting unit provided helped them get their work done well and on time.

Full Answer

- 1) For administrative units or functions, it is generally easy to identify performance measures in the upper two quadrants.
- **How much service did we provide?:** Administrative units can easily list the activities they perform, convert each one into a measure. (Upper left - quantity of effort)
 - **How well did we provide service?:** Many standard upper right quadrant measures apply to administrative units just as other units (like unit cost, workload ratios etc.).

- Tools**
1. [Performance Measure examples for Personnel, Budget, Accounting, MIS, Research and Evaluation, Facilities Mgmt, Contracting, Audit, Attorney's office, and the Director's office](#)
 2. [Types of Performance Measures found in each Quadrant](#)
 3. [Links to other performance measurement terminology](#)
 4. [TECHNIQUE: A Five Step Process for Identifying and Selecting Performance Measures](#)
 5. [A script for introducing a results-based budget by a department director \(3.2\)](#)

Stories

- Tips**
1. Customer satisfaction surveys from administrative units generate good will and improved customer relations in addition to providing performance data.

Advice from:

Organizational Resources

And for most administrative activities, it is pretty easy to identify timeliness and accuracy measures that are meaningful.

References

(2) But administrative units or functions are the hardest when it comes to identifying performance measures in the lower right quadrant. The principle reason is that it is harder to figure out who the customers are and how you would know if they are better off?

When you think about it it becomes clear that the primary customers of administrative units are the employees and supervisors of the organization. It turns out that the most important lower quadrant measures for administrative units are customer satisfaction measures. "Did we help you do your job?" is the focus of the questions.

In addition to gathering data, there are other good reasons for administrative units to conduct customer satisfaction surveys (and/or interviews). The simple act of asking customers (and taking their responses seriously) can create good will with organization managers, a commodity that is often in short supply. And the users of administrative services can often identify ways to improve services.

1. Common measures (in the upper right quadrant):

Many of the upper right quadrant "common measures" apply equally well to administrative units as to units providing direct customer service. Here is a listing of common measures in terms usually used in administrative units.

What We Do	How Well We Do It
# Classification: general	% Common measures
# Activities by type of activity	% Activity-specific measures
	% Assess: CPE?
#	% Skills / Knowledge
#	% Attitude
#	% Behavior
#	% Compliance

1. Workload staff ratio
2. Staff turnover rate (This can be measured by % of vacant positions - or more interestingly - % of employees with the organization 1 year or less.)
3. Staff morale (usually from surveys)
4. Percent of staff fully trained
5. Percent of satisfied customers (with courtesy and timeliness of service) by function
6. Percent of bilingual staff
7. Worker safety (usually accident or injury claim rate)

2. Cost measures: The following measures are the standard cost measures which fall in each quadrant. The most difficult of these to obtain is the lower left "benefit value." The cost benefit ratio equals the lower left over the upper left quadrant values.

<u>What we do</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Total Cost</p>	<u>How well we do it</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Unit Cost Percent growth in expenditure</p>
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Benefit Value Amount Surplus/Deficit</p>	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Cost Benefit Ratio Return on Investment Percent Surplus/Deficit</p>

3. Unit Specific Measures The following section provides examples (not an exhaustive list) of some of the most important performance measures for each administrative function. In most cases, the lay definition, but not the technical definition, is given.

.....Personnel

<u>What we do</u> <p style="text-align: center;"># # #</p>	<u>How well we do it</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Average time to fill a vacancy % requests pending 30 days or more %</p>
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> <p style="text-align: center;"># # # # #</p>	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> <p style="text-align: center;">Workforce stability - % vacant positions Turnover rate (non-promotions) % managers who rate personnel as "helpful or very helpful" % of workforce without benefits Rate of sick leave usage</p>

.....Budget

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% budget reviews on time % forecasting accuracy %</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p>\$ amount surplus or deficiency # # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% Surplus or deficiency Audit liabilities as % of budget % Agency performance measures heading in the right direction % Agency managers who rate support from the budget unit "good or better"</p>

.....Accounting

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% invoices paid in 30 days or less % reports completed on time % reissue/correct payroll or accounts payable</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># repeat audit findings \$ value of audit liabilities</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% repeat audit findings Audit liabilities as % of budget</p>

.....Management Information Systems

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% responses to requests for assistance in less than 24 hours</p> <p>Ratio of salary to market wages</p> <p>Staff retention rate</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% downtime during peak work hours</p> <p>% managers rating overall MIS support "good" or better"</p> <p>% of staff with high quality computer equipment</p> <p>% programs (or lines of code) with state of the art programming</p>

.....Research and Evaluation

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% reports completed on time</p> <p>Ave time to respond to requests for information</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% managers rating research and evaluation support "good" or better.</p> <p>% managers who report using research and evaluation products</p>

.....Facilities Management

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p>#</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% responses to requests in 24 hours or less</p>
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# #	% repeat calls worker safety - rate of accidents
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % managers who rate facilities support "good" or better % Sick leave due to building conditions

.....Audit

<u>What we do</u> # # #	<u>How well we do it</u> % audits completed on time % appeals of audit findings lost
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # repeat findings \$ saved from audit findings #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % repeat findings \$ saved/ avoided (est.) as % of total budget %

.....Contracting

<u>What we do</u> # #	<u>How well we do it</u> % contracts on time % agency staff trained in contract procedures
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % managers rating contracting support "good" or better % contractors rating contracting support "good" or better.

.....Counsel/Attorney's office

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>Cases per attorney Support staff per attorney Ave response time to requests</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># # # lawsuits avoided through successful negotiation # total damages paid</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% lawsuits won % appeals won Rate of avoided law suits Damages paid as % of requested damages, Damages paid as % of agency budget</p>

.....Director's Office

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% correspondence response on time % of agency locations visited this year % of staff involved in two way communication events</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% surplus or deficiency % agency's performance measures headed in the right direction % employees rating the agency a "good" or better place to work Rating of agency compared to others</p>

The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide

3.11 What are some examples of performance measures we can use for my program or service?

-Answer Contents:**
1. [Common Measures](#)
 2. [Cost Measures](#)
 -
 3. [Child Welfare](#)
 4. [Welfare to Work](#)
 5. [Education](#)
 6. [Special Education](#)
 7. [Juvenile Justice](#)
 8. [Adult Corrections](#)
 9. [Mental Health - Ch/Yth](#)
 10. [Mental Health - Adults](#)
 11. [Economic Development](#)

The Short Answer

1. Start with the common measures found in the upper right quadrant which apply to many programs. See Tool #1.
2. Consider the ways in which your customers could be better off if you did a good job.
3. Examples of performance measures for selected programs are shown below.

Full Answer

(1) The intersection of quantity and quality vs. effort and effect accounts for all performance measures for all programs. Page 50 provides a summary of the types of performance measures found in each of the four quadrants formed by the intersection of these two dimensions.

There are common measures that apply to many programs, and then there are measures that are unique to a particular program or class of programs.

We will discuss the common measures first, and then provide specific measures for as many programs and services as we can.

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Measure examples for Child Welfare, Welfare to Work, Education, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Corrections, Economic Development and more 2. Types of Performance Measures found in each Quadrant 3. Links to other performance measurement terminology 4. TECHNIQUE: A Five Step Process for Identifying and Selecting Performance Measures 5. A script for introducing a results-based budget by a department director (3.2)
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

1. Common measures (in the upper right quadrant):

What We Do # Client/customer served # Activities by type of activity	How Well We Do It % Common measures % Activity-specific measures % Activity-specific measures
Is Anyone Better Off? # % Skills / Knowledge # % Attitude # % Behavior # % Compliance	

1. Client staff ratio
2. Staff turnover rate (This can be measured by % of vacant positions - or more interestingly - % of employees with the organization 1 year or less.)
3. Staff morale (usually from surveys)
4. Percent of staff fully trained
5. Percent of satisfied customers (with service delivery functions)
6. Percent of customers seen in their own language
7. Worker safety (usually accident or injury claim rate)

2. Cost measures: The following measures are the standard cost measures which fall in each quadrant. The most difficult of these to obtain is the lower left "benefit value." The cost benefit ratio equals the lower left over the upper left quadrant values.

<u>What we do</u> Total Cost	<u>How well we do it</u> Unit Cost Percent growth in expenditure
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> Benefit Value Amount Surplus/Deficit	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> Cost Benefit Ratio Return on Investment Percent Surplus/Deficit

Program Specific Measures

The following section provides examples (not an exhaustive list) of some of the most important performance measures for each program or service. In most cases, the lay definition, but not the technical definition, is given.

3. Child Welfare

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Foster Children served # Child Abuse Investigations # Adoption recruitment sessions 	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseload to worker ratio % Foster children placed in their original neighborhood / school catchment area Ave number of changed foster care placements % Investigations initiated within 24 hrs % attending who apply for adoption
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # # # # 	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Foster children in stable permanent living arrangements after 6 months in care. % Repeat abuse/neglect cases Rate of adoptions stable after 6 months % of Foster Children with good school attendance % of Foster Children reading at grade level

Note: There are two powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with child welfare: Rate of foster care and Rate of child abuse per 100,000 children. These should be treated in the same way as any other public health population indicator. The child welfare agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines, partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

4. Welfare to Work

<u>What we do</u> # Job training sessions/trainees # Employer contacts # Employability plans developed	<u>How well we do it</u> % Participants with transportation and child care needs met % of Employers accepting placements % Unit cost of each placement
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # # # #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % Participants who get and keep jobs 6 months, 12 months, 24 months % of jobs at living wage % of jobs with health and other benefits % of children in placed families with good school attendance.

Note: There are several powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with child welfare: Poverty rate, Rate of entry onto welfare, and Percentage of families with a living wage. These should be treated in the same way as any other public health population indicator. The TANF / Welfare to Work agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines, partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

5. Education

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # students # days of instruction # parent teacher conferences 	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student - Teacher ratio % faculty certified in the subject they teach % buildings without major maintenance requirements % parents involved in school Average expenditure per student Ave daily attendance reimbursement as % of total possible % non-traditional enrollment (voc ed)
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # # # # # 	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Reading scores at or above grade % Math scores at or above grade % with good attendance % students in extra curricular activities Graduation rate (% of 9th graders who graduate on time 4 years later) % graduates in school or jobs 1, 2, 5 years after graduation % placement in jobs related to training (voc ed)

.....6. Special Education - variations or additions to performance measures above

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># special education students by type of disability # IEP's prepared / reviewed # parents/ teachers involved in IEP development</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% Special Education students receiving most of their education in regular education classrooms % IEP's meeting time requirements % parents involved in school % receiving all required IEP services</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># # # # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>% with improved reading scores from last quarter % with improved math scores from last quarter % Student and family satisfaction with support and progress Graduation rate (% of 9th graders who graduate on time 4 years later) % graduates in school or jobs 1, 2, 5 years after graduation % Teen pregnancy or STD</p>

.....7. Juvenile Justice

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># Youth in custody # Youth on probation # Youth in Juvenile Hall</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>% in community based vs. institutional care % intake screenings on time Ratio of youth to probation officers % of Juvenile Hall capacity occupied</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>Recidivism rate - % exiting custody with no repeat offense in 6, 12, 24 months Rate of probation violation % youth in school or jobs</p>

Note: There are several powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with juvenile justice, most important of these the juvenile crime rate and the violent crime rate. These should be treated in the same way as any other public health population indicator. The Juvenile Justice agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines, partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

8. Adult Corrections

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># adults in custody # drug screening tests</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>Inmate/staff ratio % positive drug screenings Disruptive incidents per month % inmates receiving drug treatment % inmates receiving mental health svcs</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>Rate of escapes Rate of recidivism % inmates who get and keep jobs 6, 12 months after release</p>

Note: There are several powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with corrections, most important of these the crime rate and the violent crime rate. These should be treated in the same way as any other public health population indicator. The Corrections agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines, partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

9. Mental Health - Children and Youth

<u>What we do</u> # clients (by diagnosis) # beds # outpatient clients # hours of therapy	<u>How well we do it</u> % intake and assessments % occupancy % bilingual staff
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # # #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % youth who show improved CAFAS scores from last quarter % Youth in school or working % Youth with attendance and grades as good or better than last quarter

Note: See note below Mental Health - Adults

10. Mental Health - Adults

<u>What we do</u> # clients (by diagnosis) # beds # outpatient clients # hours of therapy	<u>How well we do it</u> % intake and assessments on time % occupancy Waiting list Average hours of therapy per client
<u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u> # # #	<u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u> % clients who "recover" (defined as lessening of diagnosis symptoms below DSM definition) % clients in school or working % readmissions

Note: There are several powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with mental health, most important of these the prevalence of mental illness. These should be treated in the same way as any other public health population indicator. The Mental Health agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines,

partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

11. Economic Development

<p><u>What we do</u></p> <p># Business contacts # #</p>	<p><u>How well we do it</u></p> <p>Ranking on "business friendly" environment Average time from inquiry to response % Business responses to contact</p>
<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quantity</u></p> <p># new jobs from new businesses # #</p>	<p><u>Is anyone better off? - quality</u></p> <p>Rate of job growth from new businesses Rate of living wage job growth % of revenues paid by businesses</p>

Note: There are several powerful and important population indicators which are closely associated with economic development, including growth in gnp and unemployment rate. These should be treated in the same way as any other population indicator. The Economic Development agency can take the lead in assembling and working with a broad partnership to improve these numbers. But the agency is not solely responsible for these indicators, any more than the Health Department is responsible for the rate of HIV. In such situations, the agency should present its report on performance in two parts. Part one shows the population indicators, story behind the baselines, partners and what works strategy in the same way as any matter of population well-being. Part two shows the agency's performance on the most important of the above performance measures.

3.12	How do we select the most important "headline" performance measures for my program or service?
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The Short Answer

1. Identify the measures for which you currently have data.
2. Choose the most important using a forced choice process, asking: "If you had to talk about your program with just one of these circled measures, which one would it be?"
3. Identify your data development agenda using a forced choice process, asking: "If you could buy one of the measures for which you don't have data, which one would it be?"

Full Answer

.....**TECHNIQUE:** How to select the most important "headline" performance measures: See [3.7](#) for steps 1, 2 and 3.

Step 4. HEADLINE MEASURES: Identify the measures in the upper right and lower right quadrants for which there is good data. This means decent data is available today (or could be produced with little effort). Circle each one of these measures with a colored marker. Ask "If you had to talk about your program with just one of these circled measures, which one would it be?" Put a star by the answer. Then ask "If you could have a second?" You should identify no more than 4 or 5 measures. And those should be a mix of upper right and lower right measures. These are a working list of headline measures for the program.

Step 5. DATA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: Ask "If you could buy one of the measures for which you don't have data, which one would it be?" Mark that with a different colored marker. "If you could have a second?" List 4 or 5 measures. These is the beginning of your data development agenda in priority order.

Tools
1. TECHNIQUE: A Five Step Process for Identifying and Selecting Performance Measures
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

3.13 Where do we get the data to do this work? How do we get better data?

The Short Answer

1. Start with the data you already have. Most programs collect far more data than they use. Do not start the process by collecting new data.

2. Create new data where necessary. Be creative. Use common sense sampling techniques. Some data is better than no data.

Full Answer

Existing sources and creation of new data (link to data sources)

(1) Program people will often say, "We don't have any good data." And sometimes they're right. But more often than not programs collect a great deal of data. The problem is not the availability of data but the fact that it is not used for anything. Programs collect far more data than they use.

An interesting corollary here is that programs enter more data into management information systems than they use. Another use of the 4 quadrants is to evaluate requests for data elements in MIS design to focus on those that are most important and most likely to be used.

(2) So the first place you look is at the data that's already available. The technique described in the selection process [in step 4](#) identifies the data elements in the upper right and lower right quadrants for which there is currently good data.

(3) Where data does not exist, it is possible to create new data. And the most important thing to remember here is that this does not have to involve 100% reporting. It is possible to gather important performance data using sampling techniques. And these processes can be put in place quickly - in some cases in a matter of days, not years.

.....(4) Story: Let me tell you a story about a community mental health office in a small state. I

Tools
1. telephone
Stories
1. A community mental health clinic samples customer satisfaction.
Tips
1. Be very nice to the data people. Let them help you without dominating the process. 2. Use sampling, not 100% reporting to collect new data 3. Don't burden workers by collecting data you don't need. Use the 4 quadrants to see what's most important. 4. Design data collection from the final report backwards.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
1. The Evaluation Forum has created a useful guide to data gathering methods at www.evaluationforum.com
References

went to visit these people last year. And the conversation more or less started like this: "We don't have any data. We can't do this." I asked, "If we took 10% of your caseload every month and asked just two questions, do you think you could do that?" They thought they could. And we fashioned two customer satisfaction questions, one in the upper right and one in the lower right quadrants, in the most simple, plain language we could think of:

- "Did we treat you well?" (a proxy for courtesy, timeliness and cultural competence etc.)
- "Did we help you with your problems?" (a proxy for making a difference in their life or the life of their children.)

12 words total!!

(5) The difference between one time and ongoing data collection. This is one of the most important things to think about with regard to evaluation. Often evaluations are thought of and structured as one time events. Partly this is because evaluations involve intensive data collection and while you're at it you might as well collect a lot of data, often too much data, so much that they burden the program. Performance measurement data to be useful must be collected on a regular basis. This does not mean 100% reporting or even continuous reporting. It could be a sample every 3 months

For more information on data collection methodologies see the work of The Evaluation Forum www.evaluationforum.com

3.14 What do we do with performance measures once we have them? How can we use performance measures to improve performance?

The Short Answer

1. Simple guiding principle: If it's not useful, don't do it.
2. If it's useful to managers, then it will be useful to everyone else in the decision making process.
3. Use the [Seven Questions](#) about performance on a regular basis at every intersection between a supervisor and subordinate throughout the system.
4. Link performance measurement to the budget process by using the Seven Questions to structure the budget process forms and the internal budget review process.

Full Answer

- (1) The touchstone question in performance measurement: **If it's not useful, don't do it.**
- (2) The history of performance measurement is to create a complex paper intensive process that is not only not useful but actually takes time and productivity away from the enterprise.
- (3) The key to usefulness is whether it is useful to managers. Another mistake we have made is to design performance measurement and accountability systems that are "for the budget process" or "for the legislative process." If a performance measurement system is useful to managers, it will easily meet the needs of the budget or legislative processes. The reverse is not true.
- (4) The key to usefulness to managers is whether it is a simple, to the point, easily repeated process. And that simplicity is embodied in the "[seven questions](#)." These seven questions should be asked and answered on a regular basis at every intersection between a supervisor and

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seven Questions 2. An Exercise to Design a Legislative Performance Hearing
Stories
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the 7 Questions to structure supervisory conferences. 2. Use the 7 Questions at staff meetings. Have one person present a program, unit or service at each meeting. Periodically use the staff meeting for all staff to answer the questions for the operation as a whole.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

subordinate throughout the system. This includes between the Board and the agency director, the agency director and the next level, and so on down to the smallest unit of the organization.

Other uses of performance measures are addressed in the next set of questions.

3.15 [How do we use performance measures in writing and overseeing grants and contracts?](#)

3.16 [How do we use performance measures in budgeting?](#)

3.17 [How do we use performance measures in writing grant applications?](#)

3.18 [How do we use performance measures to improve cross agency service systems?](#)

3.15	How do we use performance measures in writing and overseeing grants and contracts?
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The Short Answer

1. Partner with contractors in developing the system of reporting.
2. Establish a moratorium on penalties until the system has operated for 3 years.
3. Use non-cash rewards
4. Create safeguards against unintended consequences and perverse incentives,
5. Disseminate best practice information.
6. Operate the system with low visibility until you are sure you know what you're doing.
7. Collect comparable data
8. Finally, practice what you preach.

Tools
1. Funders Role in Results Accountability
Stories
Tips
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References
"Results Based Grantmaking", available on the FPSI website

Full Answer

- (1) There are fads running through the public and private sectors for performance based contracts. Much of this work goes under the heading of "applying business-like (read "cash") incentives to reward good performance and punish bad performance."
- (2) Rewards and punishments in contracting is nothing new. There have been a wide range of incentive schemes that have been used over the years. Some are quite common and familiar, like book advances to authors, with full payment when the book is complete; or penalties for each day a construction project goes past its deadline; or amounts held in escrow pending delivery of products or services etc.
- (3) Some approach this subject with almost military zeal. The notion of wielding performance

incentives seems to make the role of contract monitor more powerful. But the truth is that successful use of performance measures is a complex undertaking and the details of how it is done will very much dictate whether it will help or hurt the system.

(4) Things that will hurt the system

- **Unrealistic standards or expectations.**
- **Same standards applied to very different providers with different case mixes.**
- **Emphasis on punishment and penalty, not reward and recognition.**
- **Using data before you have a track record on what is achievable.**
- **Collecting too much data and letting the data collection process get in the way of service delivery.**

(5) Things that will help

- **Partner with contractors in developing the system of reporting. This should include an open process to identify measures and make recommendations on how measures are used in contracting. It should include training for agency and contract staff in how to identify and use performance measures to improve performance. And it should address how contract improvement targets and, if appropriate, performance standards will be established. It is best to wait until you have a few years' experience before formalizing either.**
- **Establish a moratorium on penalties until the system has operated for 3 years. This requires some political courage, but is a way to show good faith about fairness, and address the contractors' fears about misuse of the data.**
- **Use non-cash rewards (such as greater flexibility for managers in the use of budgeted funds) and individual and group recognition for good (and improving) performance.**
- **Create safeguards against unintended consequences and perverse incentives, including the incentives to manipulate numbers or skim easy clients in order to meet performance requirements. Where significant cash incentives are involved, underlying reporting should be audited.**
- **Disseminate best practice information. The object is for contractors to succeed, not fail. And the contracting agency should do everything it can to help contractors be successful.**
- **Operate the system with low visibility until you are sure you know what you're doing. Performance systems are as much political and they are technical processes. Be smart about politics. Grow the system slowly while you work out the bugs. Don't rush into establishing standards. Emphasize performance improvement not the achievement of specific performance targets. Provide lots of space in the process for the story behind the**

curve. Share successes and when asked, be honest about low performance. This is a time to say "This is the reason why we put this system in place - to identify and improve performance..."

- **Collect comparable data** and track other state and national efforts so that you know what is comparable (and what is not comparable) performance elsewhere.
- **Finally, practice what you preach.** Agencies issuing contracts or making grants should also use performance measures to assess their own performance and work to improve. For example, contracting agencies should regularly monitor how long it takes to process a contract and pay and invoice. And should commit to using performance measures throughout the agency.

(6) Contract language itself should set up a regular reporting process and process for joint quarterly review of progress against baselines. Contract reporting can actually use the progress report categories 2,3, and 4 from the [Progress Report Prototype](#)

3.16 How do we use performance measures in budgeting?

The Short Answer

1. Performance measurement is not a magic answer. Budgeting is about choices. And choices are about power and politics. Improving budgeting does not necessarily mean improving decisions. But budgets can be made better by presenting better choices and presenting them more clearly.

2. Performance budgeting can present better choices by requiring each budget unit (internal and contract) to answer the basic questions in performance accountability:

Who are your customers. How do you measure if your customers are better off? How do you measure if you're delivering service well? How are you doing on the most important of these measures? Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better? What works to do better (including no-cost and low-cost actions)? What do you propose to do? These questions should be answered on a regular basis throughout the year, and used once a year to drive the budget.

3. The budget process should formally assess answers to these questions for each budget unit starting from the smallest budget unit to the agency as a whole.

4. Paper should be minimized by strictly limiting the number of performance measures at each level to no more than 3 to 5. Budget narrative and the printed budget document should be kept to strict minimums which can be separately supplemented in the internal and external budget process.

Tools

- 1. [An Exercise to Design a Legislative Performance Hearing](#)
- 2. [San Mateo County Outcome-Based Budget Pilot excerpts](#)
- 3. [Budget Formats Volume I and II](#)

Stories

- 1. [San Mateo County's Outcome-Based Management System Aligns Program Performance Measures, County Budget and Community Results.](#)
- 2. [San Mateo County's Children's Summit Moves 350 Participants from Talk to Action.](#)
- 3. [Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets](#)

Tips

Advice from:

- 1. [Advice from Reyna Farrales, Deputy County Manager: Lessons Learned in Implementing San Mateo's Outcome Based Management System](#)

Organizational

Full Answer

See also:

[2.15 OK, so what's the link to the budget?](#)

[Budget Formats Volume I and II](#)

(1) People are always looking for the formula way to do budgeting. Budgeting will always be a complex process of politics and choices. And performance measurement or any other thing will not change that. What performance measurement, well used, can do is provide information to make better choices, better decisions. If it is approached in this way it can make a difference.

(2) What kind of information in what form? There are a couple of things to know about budgeting processes. They process huge volumes of information quickly. They produce changes mostly at the margins. There is usually a maintenance portion and a discretionary add/change portion. Change happens mostly at the margins. Most budgeting in state, county or city government is "initiative based budgeting." (NOTE: Insert from policy brief)

(3) What budget people want to know is: Is this program worth the money? Is it producing what it should? Can it perform better? Can it be done less expensively? Not much time is actually spent on these questions. Most budget time is spent on the technical construction of the budget (including cost of living adjustments, salary and position changes etc.) Much of budget analyst time is spent making sure the details are right, that the equipment and travel request is reasonable. Strategic thinking about any given program or agency usually takes place, if it takes place at all, in a review session on the Exec side and a hearing on the legislative side. The time for any one program is very limited. So the question is: what is the most important information to provide in this setting.

(4) I would argue that it is precisely the information in the following format: (baselines, story behind the baselines, accomplishments, what works to do better, what is proposed for the next year) in addition to the usual object, sub-object and funding detail.

(5) Performance measurement is not a magic answer. Budgeting is about choices. And choices are about power and politics. Improving budgeting does not necessarily mean improving decisions. But budgets can be made better by presenting better choices and presenting them more clearly.

(6) Performance budgeting can present better choices by requiring each budget unit (internal and contract) to answer the basic questions in performance accountability: Who are your customers. How do you measure if your customers are better off? How do you measure if you're delivering service well? How are you doing on the most important of these measures? Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better? What works to do better (including no-cost and low-cost actions)? What do you propose to do? These questions should be answered on a regular basis throughout the year, and used once a year to drive the budget.

(7) The budget process should formally assess answers to these questions for each budget unit

starting from the smallest budget unit to the agency as a whole. Not all of this should needs to be printed in the budget document.

(8) Paper should be minimized by strictly limiting the number of performance measures at each level to no more that 3 to 5. Budget narrative and the printed budget document should be kept to strict minimums which can be separately supplemented in the internal and external budget process.

3.17 How do we use performance measures in writing grant applications?

The Short Answer

- 1. Funders want to fund things that make a difference in people's lives. If you can identify customer results (lower right quadrant measures) and use these to describe, plan, operate and evaluate your program you will be more successful in obtaining grants.
- 2. Be clear about the customers, the benefits to those customers and how those benefits show up in measurable terms.
- 3. Acknowledge where you need to get better in a data development agenda. (It is OK to ask for money in the grant for this purpose.)
- 4. Show that you have a process for regular review of the data and use to get better.
- 5. Don't promise too much. Allow a period of time in the grant where you gauge the effectiveness of your work before you set targets or goals.
- 6. Don't promise that your grant, by itself, will change a population indicator.

Full Answer

- (1) There are many places to submit grant applications: government, foundations, etc. Foundations are looking for the best use of their money. Government RFP's are usually implementing a specific law or grant program.
- (2) No matter who the funder, performance measures and performance accountability are important parts of grant design and presentation. You want to show that you know what impact this has on people and you know how to measure it, track it and use it to do even better.

Tools
1. A Funders Role in Results Accountability
Stories
1. In a training session for a foundation's staff, one person went back to her office at the break and looked at an application for funding that had just come in the mail. She came back to the training session and reported that all the data in this application was from the upper left quadrant... nothing about customer results.
Tips
1. Use the 4 quadrant framework as a diagnostic tool. Go through all the measures you propose to use and see if you are using the most important.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References
"Results Based Grantmaking", available on the FPSI website

(3) Most grant applications have a section on evaluation. (LINK TO EVALUATION ANSWER ABOVE) Don't be fooled into thinking that this is the only place to reference the development and use of performance measures. A good evaluation plan will not be something that is done 3 years after the end of the program, but will be part of a larger process of collecting and using data to run the program.

Many funders don't really know what they need when it comes to performance measures.

So here are some tips in using performance measures in grant applications:

- **Make sure you are clear about the customers, the benefits to those customers and how those benefits show up in measurable terms.**
- **Include both upper right and lower right quadrant data in your presentation. Acknowledge where you need to get better in a data development agenda. (It is OK to ask for money in the grant for this purpose.)**
- **Show that you have a process for regular review of the data and use to get better. Don't make the grant reporting process to the funder the only way in which this is done. Let that be a byproduct of your good management practice in using data day to day. Show that to the funder in your response.**
- **Don't promise too much. Allow a period of time in the grant where you gage the effectiveness of your work before you set targets or goals. If you make estimates of performance, make sure they are marked as such and build in a structured review and revision process - preferably one that is done jointly with the funder.**
- **Consider using all four ways of reporting progress shown in the [progress report prototype](#).**

(4) Don't promise that your grant, by itself, will change a population indicator. A common mistake in grant writing and grant making is the failure to place the grant in the context of any larger strategy. It is common for grant makers to ask for proposals to change conditions of well-being for children, adults, families and communities. We know from earlier sections of this guide that no program or agency by itself can turn an indicator curve at the population level. So grant writers and grant makers regularly over-promise what can be accomplished with their money. The answer to this problem requires intellectual honesty and some courage. Because it will inevitably require telling people things they don't want to hear.

If the grant maker wants to use resources to measurable change population level conditions of well-being, then the grantor must first articulate a view of the larger strategy necessary to accomplish this change, and then place their grantmaking within this larger strategy. For example, a grantmaking strategy to reduce youth violence, must first answer the question of how such

violence could be reduced by a comprehensive strategy, beyond the capacity of any one funder to accomplish (e.g. including such matters as gun control, changes in media content and availability, training in conflict resolution beginning in elementary school, universally available supervised after school recreation programs etc.) The funder then articulates their role within this larger strategy (e.g. conflict resolution programs in 3 area high schools). See the [schematics](#) at the end of the "Results Based Grantmaking" paper (available on the [FPSI website](#)).

3.18 How do we use performance measures to improve cross agency service systems?

The Short Answer

1. Establish some form of interagency forum, collaborative, cooperative, council or cabinet.
2. Agree on the importance of performance, and get everyone on the same page about how to develop and use performance measures.
3. Select the most important measures for both the individual agencies and for the system as a whole. Using the methodology presented here, this should lead to a short list of headline measures and a data development agenda.
4. Turn the data people loose on gathering this data. And allocate some resources to develop new data.
5. Create a regular process for leadership to review and act on the system performance data. This means having staff prepare as much as possible (the story behind the baselines, etc.) but it also means that the leadership engage in some serious deliberation about what works and what they propose to do. And it means that they must seriously engage their current and potential partners in considering options and taking action.

Full Answer

- (1) Cross agency service systems are part of performance measurement because they have customers. Any time you can identify a group of customers, then you are dealing with performance measurement as opposed to whole population well-being (results and indicators).
- (2) So with service systems, we are in effect drawing a larger fence around a set of services which span beyond a single department or organization. The fundamental

Tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability 2. Advanced view of the relationship between Performance Measures and Indicators
Stories
Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remember, improving service systems is not the same and improving population well-being. The service systems can be working well, while population well-being gets worse. 2. The idea of "front room and back room" can be a powerful image to help people think about making systems provide seamless service for customers while we do the necessary behind the scenes work.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References

questions still apply. How much service are we delivering (upper left); how well are we delivering that service (upper right); and is anyone better off (lower left and right)? Just as these questions are asked of individual programs, they can be asked about the system as a whole.

(3) The principle issue in performance accountability for systems (as opposed to programs or agencies) is WHO is accountable. There are usually not clear administrative structures which oversee such systems. And accountability is often confused at best. There are sometimes Children's Cabinets or Children's Councils or Collaboratives that try to play this role. But such accountability is often a weak matter of convention and agreement, not grounded in law.

(4) The second challenge in systems performance measurement is the difference in the way data systems define and count things. Creating an aggregate picture can be difficult for even the most basic kind of information, like how many clients are served. And unduplicated counts can be hard to establish.

(5) There is however great value in looking at system performance in addition to program and agency performance. The principle reason is the interconnection and interdependence of different parts of the service system. Customers/clients and taxpayers expect us to make sense of these systems. And performance measurement and accountability is one way to drive such an effort.

(6) OK, so how do you do it?

- If you have not already done so, establish some form of interagency forum, collaborative, cooperative, council or cabinet.
- Agree on the importance of performance, and get everyone on the same page about how to develop and use performance measures.
- Select the most important measures for both the individual agencies and for the system as a whole. Using the methodology presented here, this should lead to a short list of headline measures and a data development agenda.
- Turn the data people loose on gathering this data. And allocate some resources to develop new data.
- Create a regular process for leadership to review and act on the system performance data. This means having staff prepare as much as possible (the story behind the baselines, etc.) but it also means that the leadership engage in some serious deliberation about what works and what they propose to do. And it means that they must seriously engage their current and potential partners in considering options and taking action.

(7) Here are some other things to think about:

- Make sure that there is some measure which gets at the customer view of the whole system. This may require new data development through a customer

survey. But something like: # of different offices I had to go to in the last month. # or different workers assigned to my case would be a good start.

- **Here are some measures to consider for some different systems:
Child Welfare: % of children returning home; % recidivism; % with good school attendance and grades; average length of stay**

3.19 How do we create a performance improvement system in our organization?

The Short Answer

- 1. Start small.
- 2. Keep it simple.
- 3. Minimize paper.
- 4. Model behavior
- 5. Connect to the budget.
- 6. Make it useful (especially to managers).

Full Answer

There are in fact many books written on this subject. So go buy one and read it. But here's something you might not read in one of those books:

- (1) Start small: Don't try to do it all in one year
- (2) Keep it simple: The Seven questions are simple
- (3) Minimize paper: One useful page is better than one thousand not-so-useful pages
- (4) Model behavior: Start at the bottom and the top. Leaders should use regular 7 question reporting in their periodic conferences
- (5) Connect it to the budget process: The 7 questions can be used in internal budget hearings and can be used to design budget forms. If it's connected to the budget process it will be taken more seriously
- (6) Make it useful to managers: If it is useful to managers, it will meet the needs of top management, the budget, the legislature or

Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Seven Questions Central to Performance Accountability 2. Performance Measurement: A Step by Step Schematic 3. Administrative Unit Performance Measures 4. Performance Measure Examples for Programs and Services
Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. San Mateo County's Outcome-Based Management System Aligns Program Performance Measures, County Budget and Community Results. 2. Los Angeles Children's Planning Council uses the power of outcomes and indicators from planning to budgets
Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If it's not useful, don't do it.
Advice from:
Organizational Resources
References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TBD

county council. And the data will be better.

(7) Pay attention to data quality and timeliness: This means investing in data development and data systems.

(8) Insist on a few "headline" measures for each component of the department/agency: Do not allow people to use too much data, to overwhelm the system; to lose the forest for the trees.

(9) Live by a simple rule: If it's not useful, don't do it.

See also:

[3.5 Where do we start in an organization that wants to do this?](#)

[3.6 Where do we start in an organization that doesn't want to do this?](#)