



DFSS's Commitment to Outcomes

Updated: January 2022

1. **Department Overview**
2. **Commitment to Outcomes**
3. **Operationalizing Equity**



1. Department Overview // Mission

OUR MISSION

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that **build** stability, **support** their well-being, and **empower** them to thrive

OUR PRIORITIES

Deliver and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive

Collaborate with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change

Inform the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners

Steward DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

1. Department Overview // Highlights

- DFSS is one of the largest social service funders in Chicago
- Stewards a \$790 million budget (\$404M annual budget + \$386M in CARES, ARP, and Bond investments)
- Provides funding to 350 community-based organizations (delegate agencies); issues over 1,600 contracts (grants); and invests \$346 million into Chicago communities each year
- Provides direct services through six Community Service Centers and six Regional Senior Centers (individuals are assessed and receive in-person assistance by DFSS staff)

1. Department Overview // Program Divisions

Children Services

What

- Early Head Start
- Head Start
- Preschool for All
- Prevention Initiative
- Child Care

How

- Community-based early learning sites

Division on Domestic Violence

What

- 24/7 DV hotline
- Legal counseling & advocacy

How

- Counseling providers
- Legal advocates

Homeless Services

What

- Prevention
- Outreach & shelter
- Housing supports
- System coordination

How

- Service providers
- Call center

Human Services

What

- Case management
- Referrals to services
- Public benefits assessment

How

- Community Service Centers with DFSS staffing
- Service provider partners

Senior Services

What

- Meals on Wheels
- Caregiving
- In-home care
- Information & benefits

How

- Senior Centers staffed by DFSS employees
- Service providers

Workforce Services

What

- Job preparation, training & placement
- Connection to supports

How

- Job training providers
- Community Re-Entry Support Centers

Youth Services

What

- Youth employment
- Enrichment
- Prevention & intervention

How

- One Summer Chicago
- Afterschool programs
- Mentoring

1. Department Overview // Key Partners



HARVARD Kennedy School
Government Performance Lab



JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY

GovEx

**Civic
Consulting**
alliance

all Chicago 
making homelessness history

thrivechicago

UIC
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

2. Commitment to Outcomes // Overview

At its heart, DFSS's Commitment to Outcomes is about better results for vulnerable Chicagoans.

Through a Commitment to Outcomes, it is anticipated that DFSS will be able to:

- Clearly describe, measure, and report on the outcomes it wants to achieve
- Use these outcomes to drive decisions around programming, funding, and collaborations
- Adopt effective internal practices to coordinate across program areas and with grantees

2. Commitment to Outcomes // Overview

The Commitment to Outcomes is built upon a Strategic Framework, with process improvements scaffolded over time



2. Commitment to Outcomes // Overview

The Commitment to Outcomes is driven by guiding questions, new processes and tools, and improved data capacity and use



Example Guiding Questions

- What are the high-level changes that you want to occur in the lives of people served by the program?
- What data do we have – or need – to understand program performance?

- How do the program model and services need to change? Why?
- Who is the target population for this program (beyond basic eligibility)?
- Are we funding services equitably?

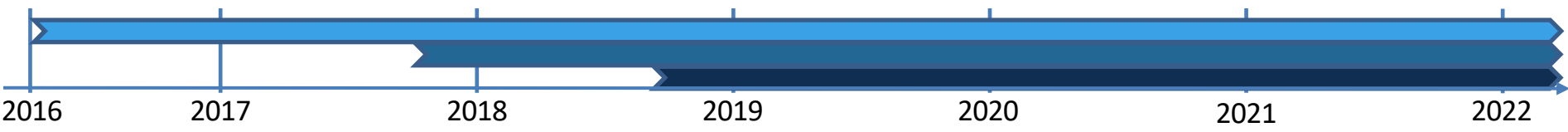
- What levers do we have to improve performance? What key activities drive the model?
- Who are we serving?
- Are we delivering services equitably?

Tools, Processes & Data

- Outcome dashboards
- Decision-making filters for funding opportunities and reductions
- Operational database improvements

- RFP planning: program analysis, best practice research, workshoping
- Applicant and evaluator surveys; service provider and stakeholder interviews and focus groups

- Active Contract Management (ACM)
- Performance Improvement Initiative prioritization and tracking tool
- Logic models and process mapping
- Data linkages



2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 1: Developing a Strategic Framework

The foundation of the Strategic Framework is understanding the difference between outputs and outcomes

	Output Metrics (Lead Indicators)	Outcome Metrics
<i>Description</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning signs indicating if a program is on track to achieve its ultimate results • Measure quantity and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate results a program aims to achieve (for clients) • Measure impact and quality
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be early proxy measure for results • Often faster to observe or easier to measure than results • Sometimes necessary to make sure data available for other metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly linked to the purpose of the program • Can capture whether program has lasting impact
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alone, rarely offer insight into efficacy/opportunities for improvement • May be misleading because never perfectly predict results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often time delayed • May require matching data to other systems
<i>Examples</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people who graduate job training • Percentage of client data entered into a system • Time from child referral to when services begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wages 1 year after training completion • Recidivism post release from prison • Child removals after stabilization services

2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 1: Developing a Strategic Framework

Refreshed DFSS's overall mission and priorities with stakeholder input

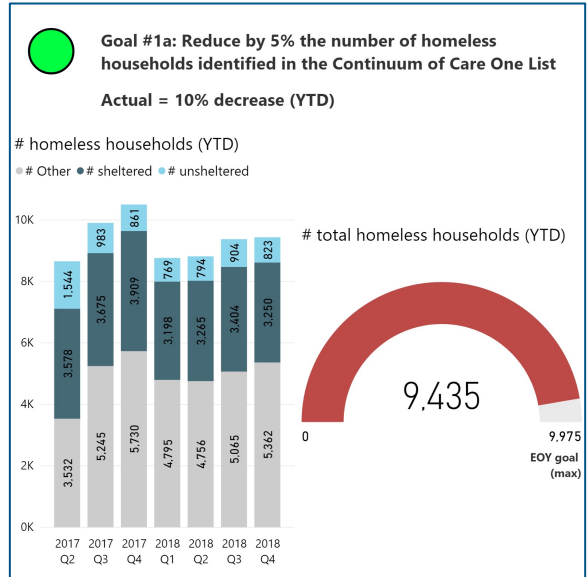
Set division-level outcome goals in line with DFSS priorities

Started to "live into" framework internally

OUR MISSION
Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that **build** stability, **support** their well-being, and **empower** them to thrive

OUR PRIORITIES

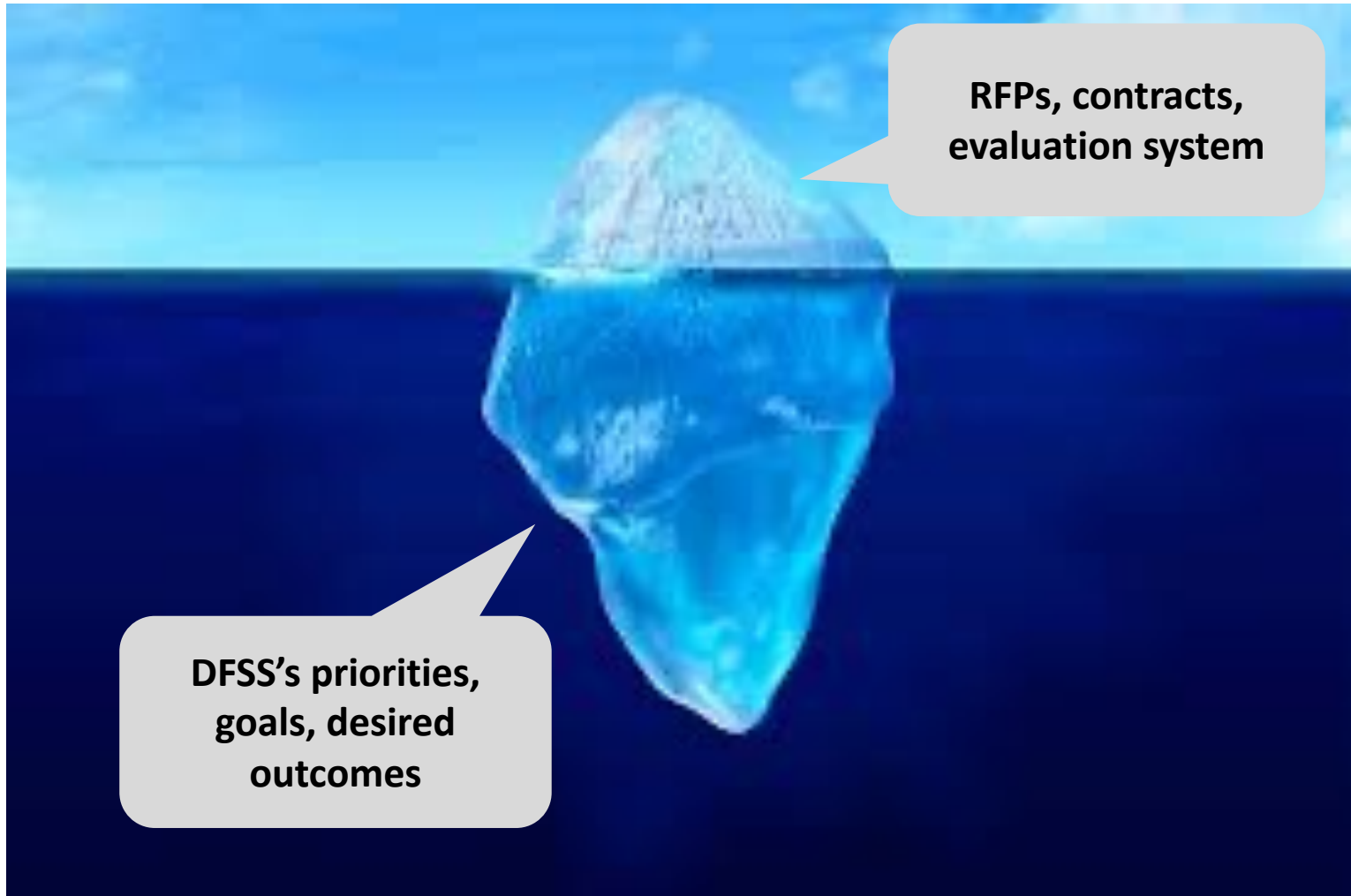
- Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively



- 1** Measuring, reporting on, and refreshing priorities and goals
- 2** Making decisions
- 3** Driving collaboration

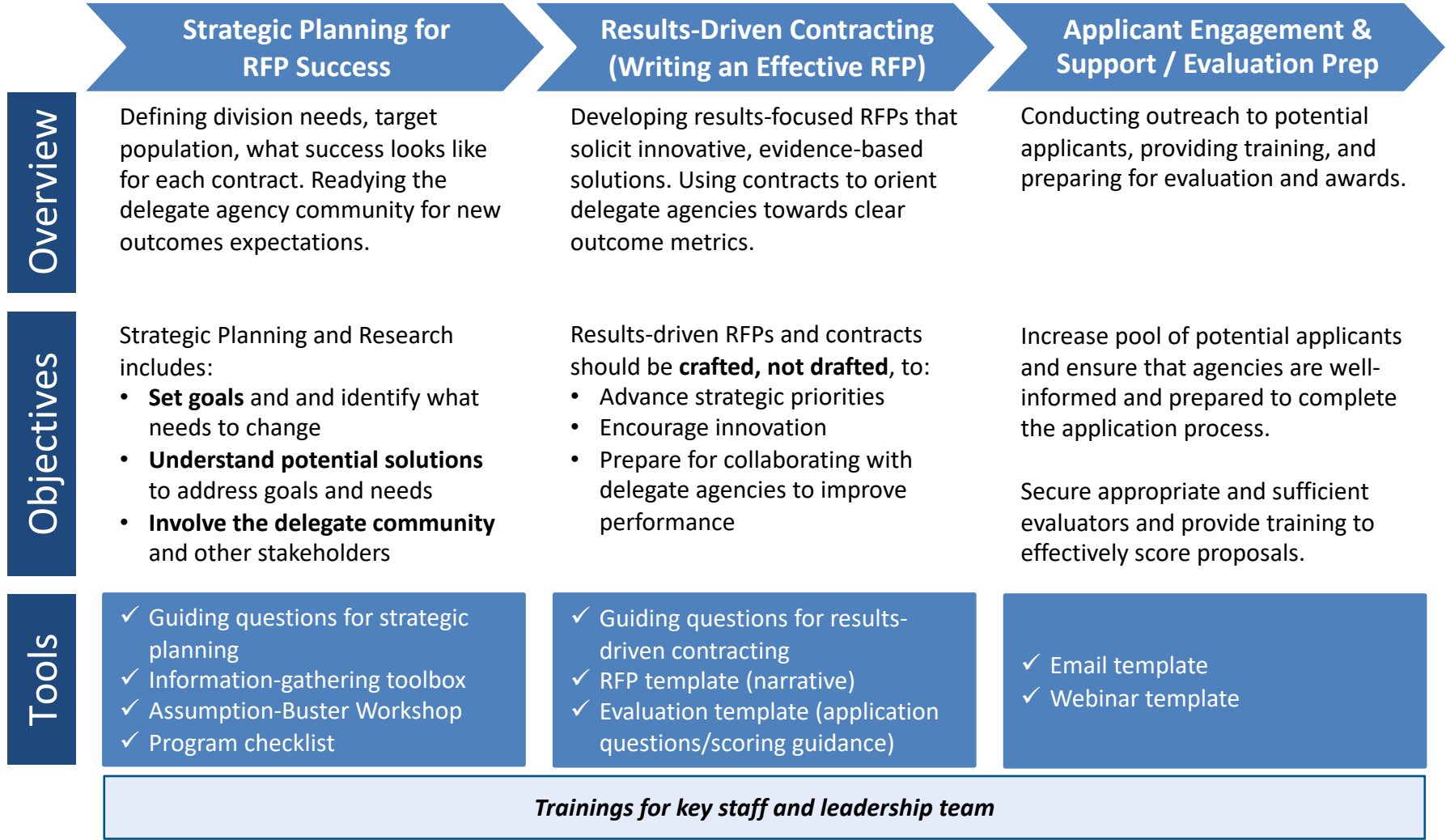
2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 2: Strategic Contracting

DFSS's work is largely delivered by grantees – to achieve results, priorities and goals must be integrated into results-driven requests for proposals (RFPs) and contracts



2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 2: Strategic Contracting

The RFP development process was revamped to allow for strategic planning and results-driven contracting



2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 2: Strategic Contracting

***Refreshed RFP
focus on shared outcome
goals rather than activities***



***Updated selection criteria
to reflect our focus on
results and best practices***

- 1** Strength of proposed program
- 2** Performance management and outcomes
- 3** Organizational capacity
- 4** Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds

***Revised application
questions to help DFSS make
more informed decisions***

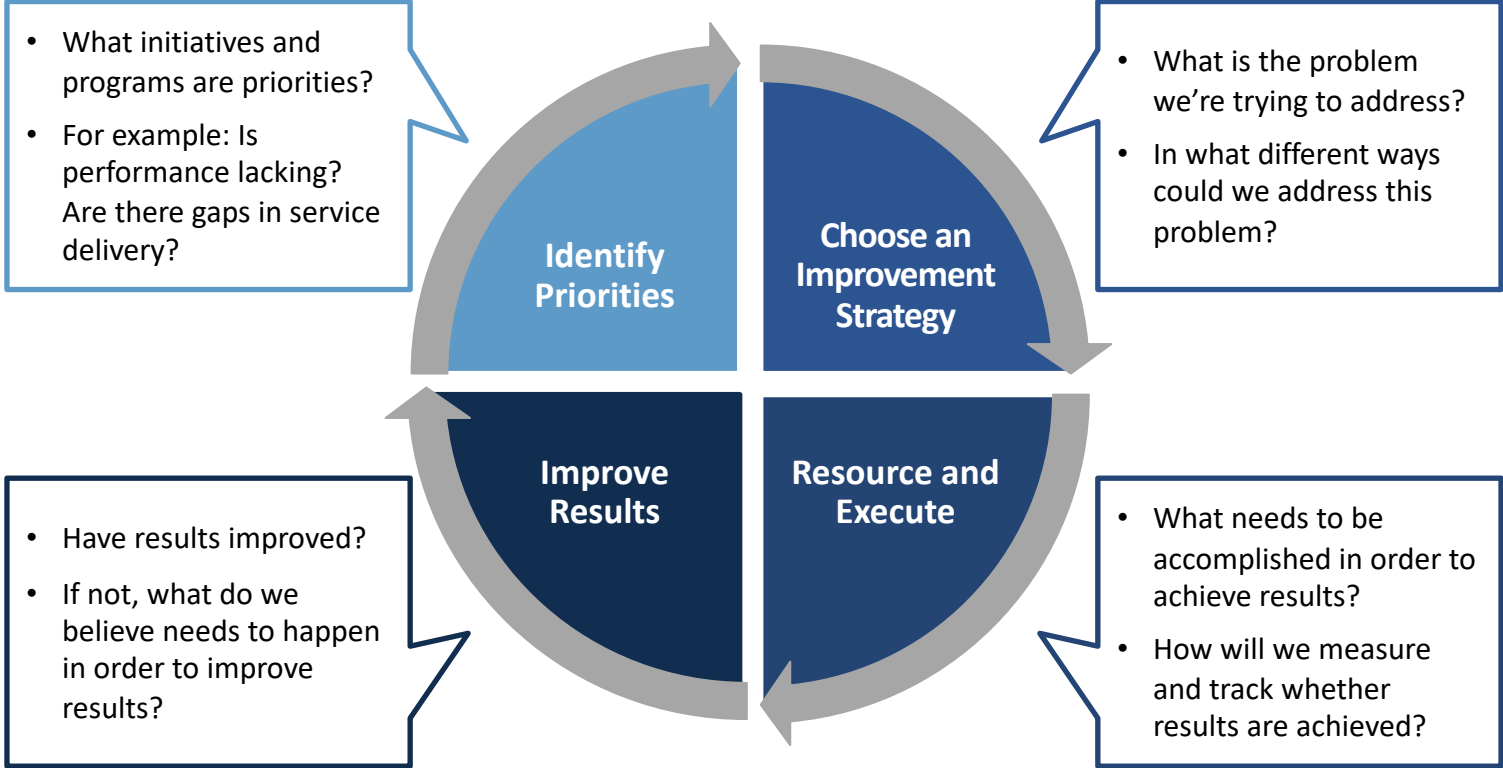
Example questions

“What are the challenges and critical needs facing your intended client population?”

“Describe the evidence base and/or best practices that support the proposed program.”

“Please tell us about a time your agency made a programmatic or organizational change based on data collected.”

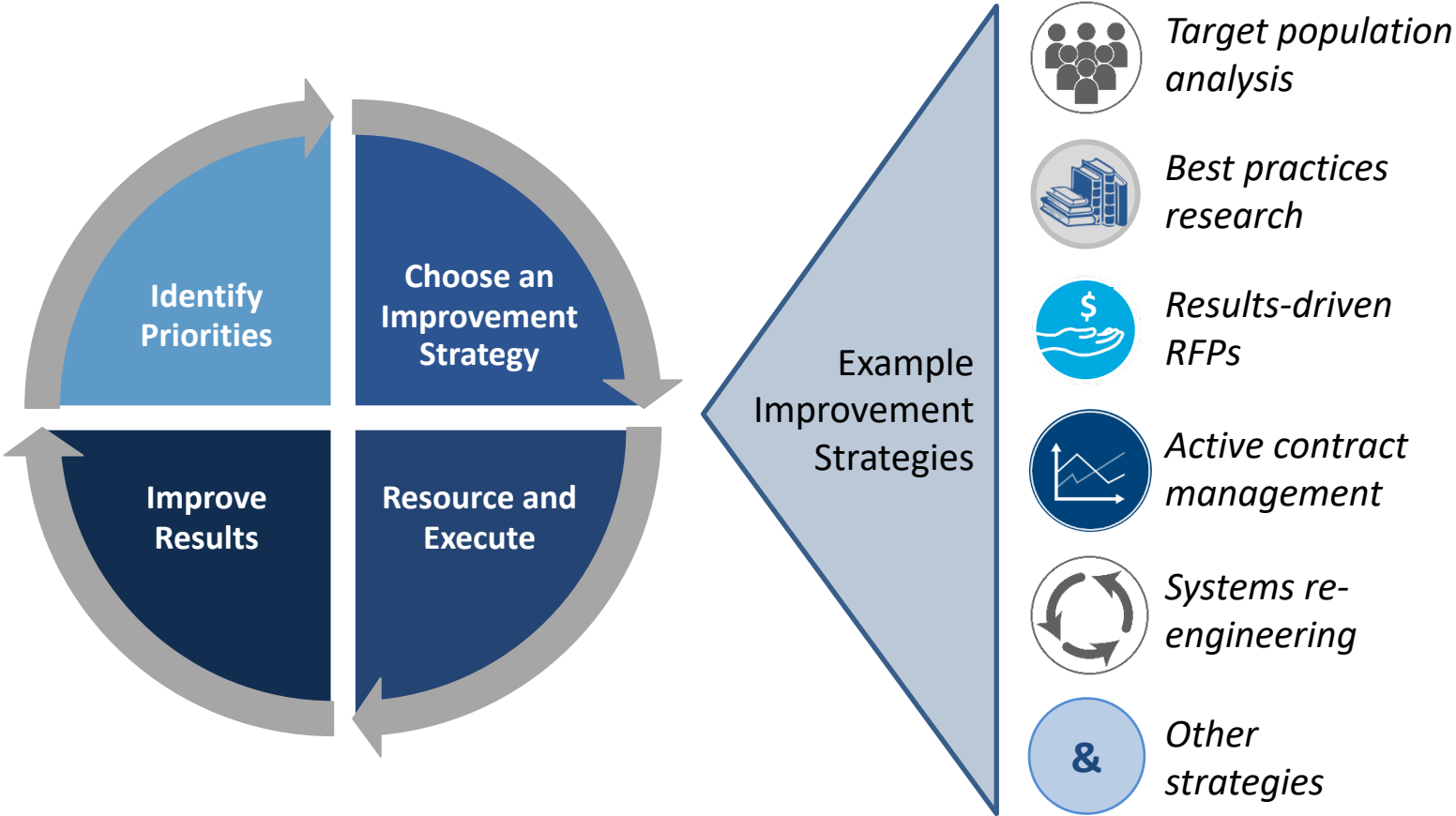
2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 3: Performance Improvement



Strengthen links in our process to help prioritize, resource, and drive action and improvement

2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 3: Performance Improvement

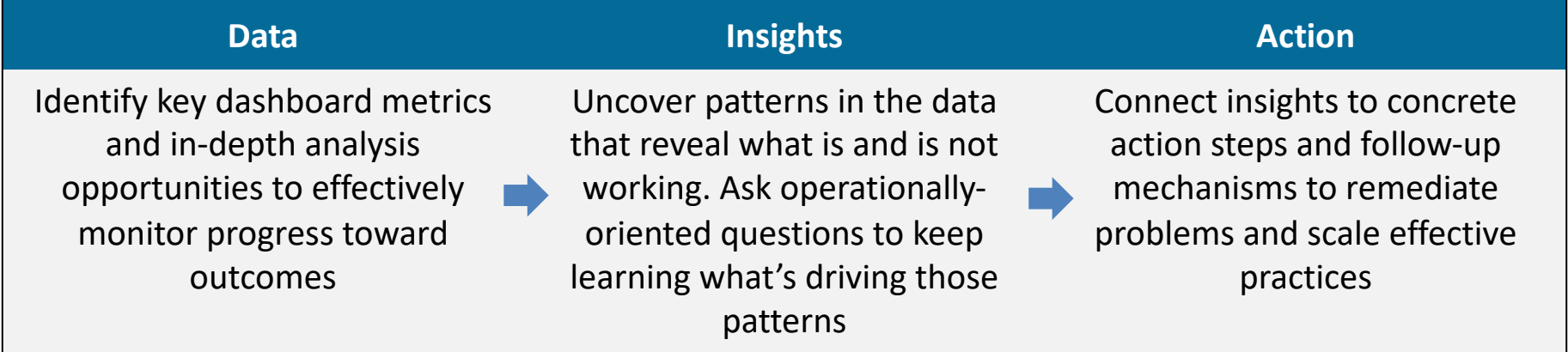
Selecting potential improvement strategies to match the need



2. Commitment to Outcomes // Phase 3: Performance Improvement

Active Contract Management

- Regularly and proactively collaborating with delegate agencies to improve outcomes
- Using real-time data to understand current performance, monitor progress, and quickly identify trends and troubleshoot problems
- Identifying opportunities to improve service delivery systems and share best practices across delegate agencies
- Improving regular communication through “feedback loops” about performance between DFSS and delegate agencies



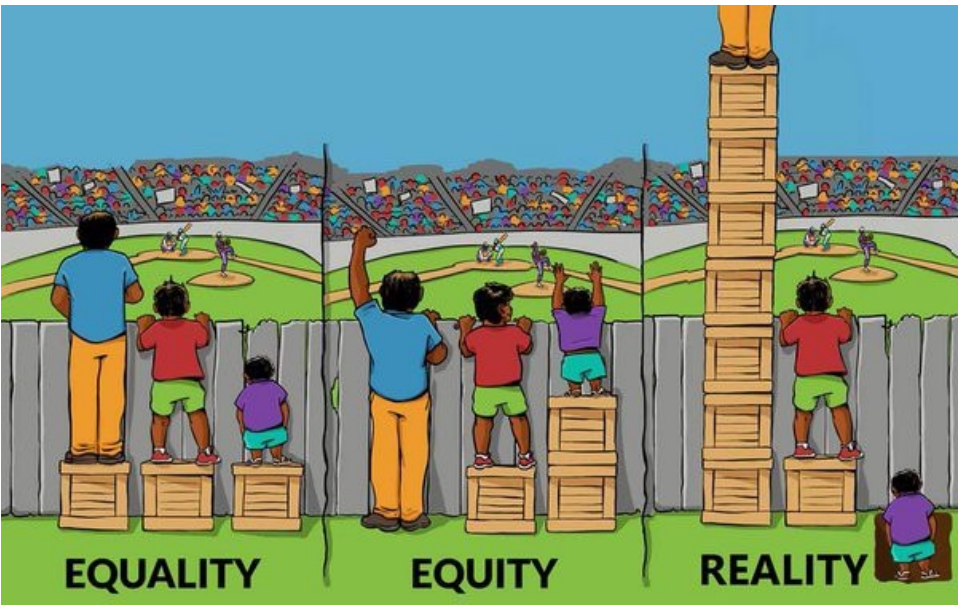
3. Operationalizing Equity // Overview

The City of Chicago defines equity as both an outcome and a process.

As an **outcome** equity results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive. Acknowledging the present and historical inequality that persist in our society, equity is a future state we strive to create where identity and social status no longer predestine life outcomes.

As a **process**, equity requires a new way of doing business: one that (1) prioritizes access and opportunities for groups who have the greatest need; (2) methodically evaluates benefits and burdens produced by seemingly neutral systems and practices; and (3) engages those most impacted by the problems we seek to address as experts in their own experiences, strategists in co-creating solutions, and evaluators of success.

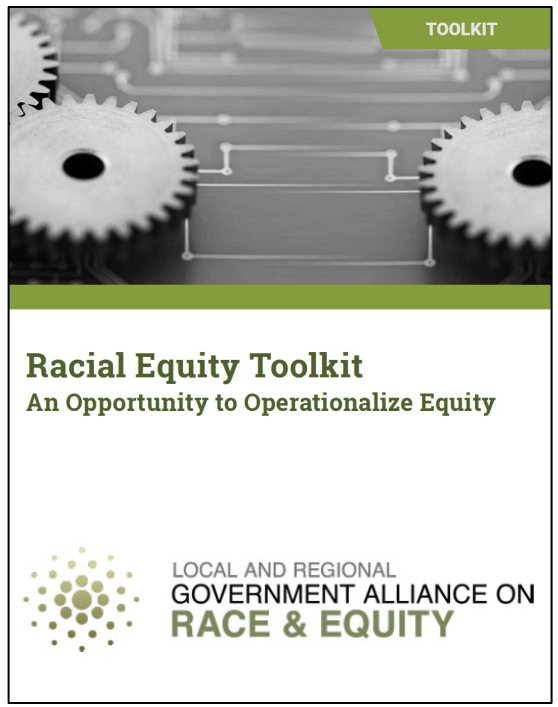
Racial equity focuses on the social construction of race and how it has been used (historically and presently) to unjustly distribute opportunity and resources based on a person’s skin color, heritage, ethnicity, and/or national origin. Advancing racial equity requires an analysis of systemic racism inclusive of the ways harm is created at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels. It also requires a commitment to dismantling systems that perpetuate racialized outcomes and rebuild systems that produce systemic inclusion.



3. Operationalizing Equity // Funding (RFPs)

DFSS is currently focused on three primary opportunities for integrating equity goals into the RFP process

Tools to shape development of program model and service delivery



New application questions to assess agency's service approach

Example questions

How does your agency reflect and engage the diverse people and experiences of the communities it serves (e.g., board, leadership)?

“Please describe how client feedback and/or input is incorporated into your service delivery.”

What organizational competencies, capabilities and/or infrastructure has your agency developed to serve your intended target population?

Surveys to learn about applicant's experience responding to RFPs

- 1** Agency size, previous City funding, and staff capacity
- 2** Opportunity to provide creative solutions
- 3** Quality of application resources and supports
- 4** “Usability” of application system

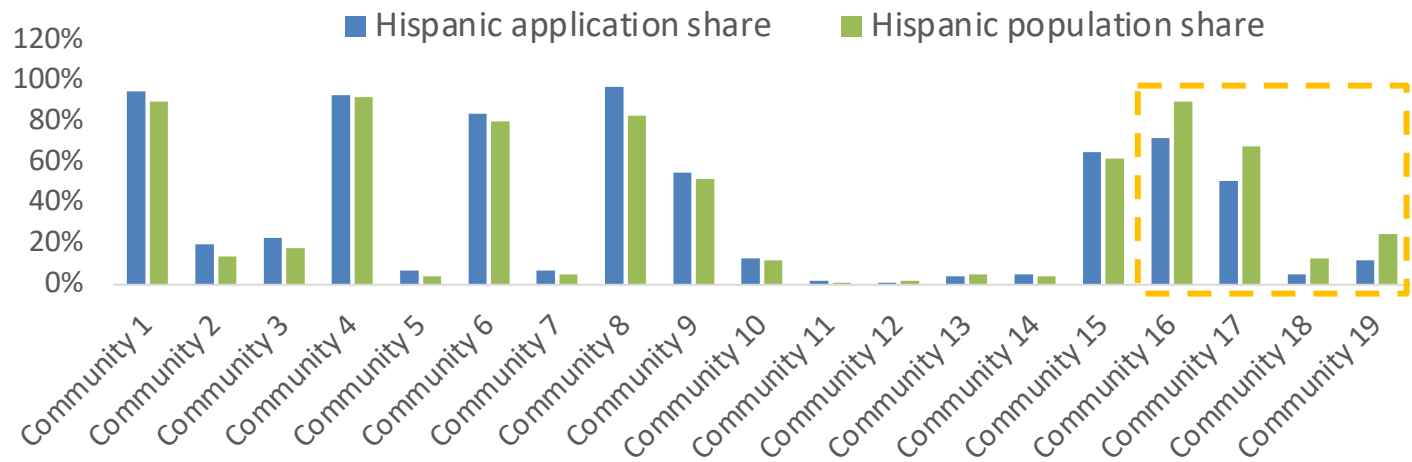
3. Operationalizing Equity // Service Delivery

DFSS applied Active Contract Management techniques to drive equity goals for the Rental Assistance Program

1. Use live program data to identify gaps and monitor progress

Simulated Data

Share of applications started by Latinx residents vs. community Latinx population share



2. Develop and test strategies to improve equity goal

Increase application share by:
 Better engaging the target population +
 Simplifying the application process

- Interview on-the-ground stakeholders
- Deploy new, targeted outreach strategies
- Develop accessible instructions in multiple languages
- Clearly communicate program rules



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