



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.”

## **The DFSS Strategic Framework: Strategic Contracting**

DFSS launched the Strategic Framework in early 2016 to transition our department to a more outcome-oriented and data-driven approach for delivering services. At its heart, the Strategic Framework is about placing greater focus on the quality of services and client progress (outcomes), as opposed to the number of clients or units of service delivered (outputs).

The process started with the development of a refreshed mission and four department-wide priorities. Over the past 18 months, DFSS divisions, whether program or administrative, have worked to identify, measure, report on, and review division-level outcome goals and metrics that support these priorities.

As 2018 begins, *we are entering the next phase* of this work. The large majority of DFSS’ work is achieved through partnerships with our delegate agencies, and the outcome goals that we identify must be properly integrated into the department’s RFPs and contracts if we are to make progress in achieving them. With this in mind, DFSS leveraged the Strategic Framework to submit a successful proposal to the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) for technical assistance on implementing an outcomes-driven approach to contracting. Specifically, we will be focused on:

- developing RFPs that clearly identify the target population, communicate division and population needs, define what success looks like for each contract, and ready the delegate community for new expectations;
- creating RFPs and contracts that solicit evidence-based, innovative solutions and orient delegates towards clear outcome metrics, and;
- implementing active contract management techniques like reviewing real-time performance data with delegates to monitor progress, swiftly detect issues, and make course corrections.

We have started to make adjustments in the language of our RFPs that reflect this work, and they will evolve further as we continue to learn from our GPL partners and gain feedback from our stakeholders. The Strategic Framework is not about playing “gotcha” with delegate agencies or fixing something that was being done incorrectly. To the contrary – outcome-based decision-making is a shift happening in human services nationally and we are proud to be at the forefront.

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