



Organizational Effectiveness Guide: A Resource for Technical Assistance and Consulting

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Collaboration Statement

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program is a collaborative effort of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. It was established to train direct service workers, supervisors, administrators, and foster parents in providing social services to abused and neglected children and their families. The Training Program is centrally managed and regionally administered by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Training Program is to train and provide technical support to those working in the Child Welfare system and to support those working with us to help families and communities to safely parent children and youth.

Funding Statement

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Table of Contents

Resource Guide Overview

Assessment

Strategic Readiness Review and System Needs Assessment	1
Mission, Vision, and Values Overview	2
Formulating the Mission.....	4
Formulating the Vision	5
Identifying Organizational Values.....	6
Questions for Reviewing Already Developed Mission, Vision, and Values	7
Customer Analysis	8
Mapping of Community Resources	10
The Agency's Current Program.....	11
SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)	13
Current Initiatives	15
System Assessment overview	16
Inputs	17
Activities.....	19
Outputs	21
Outcomes	22
Performance Capacity Assessment Overview	24
Leadership	25
Structure and Culture	26
Staffing.....	26
Communication	27
Employee Relations	27
Performance Management	28
Organizational Development.....	28
Rewards.....	29

Plan

Introduction	31
Planning for Change: The Planning Team	32
Plan Questions.....	34
Change Plan Template	37
Organization Action Plan	39

Implementation

Introduction	41
The Strategic Playbook.....	42
Communicating the Change Strategy	45
Data Collection... ..	47
Implementation: Successes and Barriers.....	49
Managing Complex Change	50

Evaluation and Monitoring

Introduction 53
Overarching Suggestions and Considerations 54
Outcome Evaluation Plan Worksheet 55
Creating an Evaluation Team 57
Examining Outcomes in Relation to Objectives 58
Collecting Data..... 60
Choosing Data Collection Instruments..... 66
Analyzing and Using Data..... 68
Disseminating Results 70
Bibliography 71
Evaluation Websites 72

Organizational Effectiveness Guide Overview

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program has created this Organizational Effectiveness Guide: A Resource for Technical Assistance and Consulting in order to provide useful, reliable, professional, and easy to understand tools to support Organizational Effectiveness (OE) work throughout our Child Welfare System.

These tools have been organized to allow consultants and Training Program specialists to support work done by a child serving agency through provision of exercises and questions for assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating organizational change. These tools may be used in chronological order as found in the Guide to complete an entire organizational assessment and change plan, or individually to complete smaller tasks.

The ultimate goal of this Organizational Effectiveness Guide is similar to the goal of all child welfare agencies: to improve outcomes for children and their families. By completing the work required to improve Organizational Effectiveness, Child Welfare Agencies are helping insure that services to children and their families are provided with an eye towards successful outcomes and results, and in the most efficient and strategic ways possible.

Assessment Section

Strategic Readiness Review and System Needs Assessment

Overall Approach to Implementation of the Strategic Readiness Review and the Systems Needs Assessment:

- The Strategic Readiness Review and the System Needs Assessment are designed to assist the work that will allow an organization to complete the following questions:
 - What is your organization's current state?
 - What is your organization's desired state?
 - Based on your organization's current and desired state, what are the most critical gaps for your organization to fill in order to perform as an effective system?
 - Given these gaps, what prioritization and sequence do you think would make the most sense as you work on closing them?

Following the completion of this section, an organization will be better able to better plan, implement, and evaluate/monitor change in a strategic fashion.

- The approach to administering the assessment should be diagnostic and consultative:
 - The key to a diagnostic approach is to ask open-ended questions with very little leading or indications of right and wrong answers.
 - The key to a consultative approach is that trust and relationships are built during the process by shaping questions and follow-up probes to the language and viewpoint of the client, not to those of the assessor.
 - Assessors in a consultative mode will also move dynamically and iteratively around the tool, as opposed to sticking rigidly to each section or question in sequence.
- The key objectives of systems needs assessment suggest that an effective assessor:
 - Reinforces the theory and practice of organizations as systems;
 - Brainstorms with and makes suggestions to the client regarding:
 - Available data and environmental perspectives;
 - Ideas for innovation regarding the client's current thinking and practice
 - Provides examples of like work from similar organizations;
 - Provides tools to help assess particularly complex aspects of the organizational system (e.g. Culture).
- Assessors should consider applying a change planning template prior to completing the system assessment. This may help build the client's understanding of how the assessment will link to specific action plans. This activity is described in the Plan Section of this resource guide.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Defining and being guided by the “true north” direction of the agency and its work is especially critical for ongoing staff and stakeholder support. Many organizations have done the “visioning thing” over the last few years, yet too often it is a one-time, feel-good activity and work product that is hung on a wall or placed on a shelf. If this is the case, an agency risks striving for and achieving objectives that may save money and time, but do not serve clients and communities as originally and most deeply intended. “Doing the wrong thing well” is a surefire prescription for a poor Return On Investment (ROI).

Below is a chart that defines and describes what is meant by the phrases Mission, Vision, and Values.

	Defined	Example	Misc.	Questions:
Mission	A statement of what you do—your unique role in making that community vision come to be—what it is that you do which causes the community to provide resources and support your work.	<i>Using teamwork, partnerships, and stellar individual effort, Utopia County CYS will ensure that children are free from abuse, neglect, and other forms of child maltreatment. Utopia CYS works to develop stable and loving homes for children to grow and promotes their educational and medical/educational and social well-being.</i>	Three to five sentences Captures the importance of the work Easy to carry around in your head Helps people understand what to do even in the absence of specific direction.	Does your mission light a fire in the hearts of those who must carry it out? Did they play a role in its development?
Vision	A statement of a desired future state for your organization and/or your community	<i>Utopia County is a place where all children grow and develop in homes and environments that encourage and fully support the realization of their potential.</i>	Aim high! Define the kind of community in which you'd like to live and work. No one is going to hold you to making it a reality . . . it may always exceed our grasp . . . but it's important to “see” it! Martin Luther King's “I Have A Dream” speech, 1963, states his vision.	When you dream, what is it that you see? Does your vision inspire people and create the interest in changing? What would cause others to rally around your vision?
Values	A set of inviolate principles/ philosophical approaches to the work at hand	<i>Strengths based Family focused Child centered Culturally sensitive Collaborative</i>	Law Regs NASW Code Schulman	What doesn't change regardless of resource level or changing approaches?

If an organization has not completed the work of developing Mission, Vision, and Values, the consultant should aid this process. Below is a question set to review prior to completing this task.

An integral step prior to developing mission and values is to determine how best to make those decisions. Questions to consider include, in their general sequence:

- Who is involved? Who does this decision impact?
- What is the current situation? What additional information do we need?
- What are the criteria for a satisfactory (realistic versus optimal*) decision?
- What are the alternatives and their pros and cons, or trade offs?
- What is the decision?
- How and when should the decision be implemented?

*Many decision making methods attempt the optimal versus satisfactory result. However, there are a number of flaws to such an approach; optimal decisions are typically harder and take longer to identify and implement; their cons or negative trade-offs may be much higher than a satisfactory but more balanced and pragmatic decision.

Formulating the Mission

Mission Statement = Cross between an advertisement and executive summary

Characteristics of an Effective Mission Statement

- **Brief** (*3-5 simply stated sentences*)
 - **Tells Who Benefits** – *Who are the customers?*
 - **Tells What** – *What is going to be done?*
 - **Tells How** – *Methods, strategies & values that will be used to produce the results*
- **Broad** (*describes comprehensive outcomes*)
- **Clear** (*meaning is clear to everyone*)
- **Compelling** (*inspires commitment*)
- **Memorable** (*can be memorized easily*)

Example of Mission Statements:

Mission of Family Group Decision Making Leadership Team

“The mission of the leadership team is to guide and support best-practice in the implementation of Family Group Decision Making in Pennsylvania.”

Mission of Child Welfare Training Program

“The Mission of the Training Program is to train and provide technical support to those working in the Child Welfare system and to support those working with us to help families and communities to safely parent children and youth.”

Mission of Independent Living Program

“Pennsylvania Independent Living Practices engage youth and young adults in a coordinated, cross-system effort to improve their successes and permanent connections, as they become responsible and productive citizens.”

Formulating the Vision

Vision = what success looks like

Question set when developing a vision:

- When you dream, what is it that you see?
- Does your vision inspire people and create the interest in changing?
- What would cause others to rally around your vision?
- What is your vision for your community?
- How will you express your vision? (Who do you tell? Do you go on TV?)

Example of Vision Statements:

Vision of Family Group Decision Making Leadership Team

“The Leadership Team envisions families being empowered through the use of Family Group Decision Making as the standard for cross-system service delivery in Pennsylvania.”

Vision of Child Welfare Training Program

The Vision of the Training Program is safety, permanence, and well-being for children & youth, families, and communities, supported by work of competent, committed, and confident professionals.

Vision of Independent Living Program

A system of services and supports that empowers youth and young adults to reach their fullest potential

Identifying Organizational Values

Values provide an important foundation for establishing and embedding expectations about how we will operate and treat each other. That is, values help to establish explicit foundational guidelines for behavior, operations, and decision making. Value-based guidelines support the vision and provide the mechanism by which organizations balance accountability and autonomy, both of which are necessary for high performance.

Since we as individuals all have our own definitions of values, identifying values for the organization also involves defining what we mean by the words we choose.

- What are your organizational values?
- How do you develop them?
- Who should be part of the discussion?
- What must you do to show your devotion to those values?
- What must you do to drive those values throughout the organization?

Instructions:

Identify and define 4-5 key values that support your vision and mission.

Value	Definition	Examples how demonstrated through behavior.
Example: Teamwork	We believe that teamwork is defined by...	

EXAMPLES OF VALUES

Common Values and Beliefs of FGDM Models

- All families have strengths.
- Families deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- A team approach is more likely to produce positive solutions for change.
- Families have strengths and can change.
- Strengths are what ultimately resolve concerns.
- Options are preferable to advice.

Child Welfare Training Program Values

All people deserve respect as individuals and are valued as part of the human family. Each person's unique blend of culture is valued and included in our work.

We value families and youth as members of our team and recognize their contributions to the history and future success of the Training Program.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEWING ALREADY DEVELOPED MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Who are you, and why is that?

- What are your vision, mission, and values?
- How were they created? Who was involved?
- How do they impact the work that happens here?
- How do you articulate them? In and out of the agency? In the community?
- How do you operationalize them? In and out of the agency? In the community?
- Are they as relevant now as ever or do they need revisiting?
- Does the mission statement fit current operations, practice and goals?
- Does it have clarity in its current form?
- Does staff have a commitment to the mission?
- Is there general agreement among staff regarding the relevance of the mission?
- How have you anchored these values in behaviors?
- How are people accountable for them?
- How do you link your vision/mission/values to initiatives, outputs, and outcomes?

Customer Analysis

This element and work product answers the question: *Who are our customers and stakeholders, and what compelling, differentiating value do we intend to provide to them?* Agencies that clearly understand their customers and stakeholders in this manner are more likely to serve the right people with the right products and services. Clear strategic customer analysis can lead to positive, compliance-related planning efforts, coupled with strong community-level partnerships.

Use the following definitions to guide your analysis. How you define these entities impacts the decisions that you make. How you define each entity impacts how you serve each group. How you define each entity may create conflict when decisions are made on behalf of each group.

CUSTOMER - Those participants whose status changes as a result of the services and/or product they receive; the ultimate beneficiary of organization's services.

STAKEHOLDER - Those participants who have an interest in or participate in what we do for our customers.

QUESTION SET: *What does the client value or need from you?*

The organization's strategic customer analysis:

- In general, what products and services do you currently provide and why?
Youth and young adult? Children? Families? Communities? Other?
- What are your mandates? How do your mandates direct your products and services?
- Based on what strengths and needs in your community do you choose to provide these services?
- Based on what other considerations do you provide them?
- How do your products and services fit in with other service providers in your community?
- What role do your community and your partners play in defining your services?
- How are families and youth involved in defining services?
- To provide these services well and into the future, what do you need?
- How effective are your services and how do you know?
- Does your agency have a clear, working definition of who its customers are?
- Can your division heads and senior managers tell you who their customers are and what they need and value? How about front line workers?
- Who is it that you are serving? What do you know about them?
- Who should you be serving? What do you know about them?
- Who are your stakeholders? Are you and your stakeholders working together to serve the same people?
- How are you defining initiative related services to your clients and systems partners? Please describe as specifically as possible.

Mapping of Community Resources

Rationale for Mapping Exercise

This exercise has been developed to support county and/or agency planning efforts in anticipation of the unique challenges of integrating child serving human services systems. The purpose of the exercise is to map the county's existing resources, determine who has access to those services and see where they overlap. To gain a full perspective, services that reside within the county and those who have been contracted to provide them should be taken into consideration. The goal is to have a useful tool at the end of the process that will help counties determine where to begin the course of working toward integration. This is helpful in development of the Integrated Children's Service Plan and is also a useful tool for counties implementing Systems of Care.

Objectives:

- Map formal and informal resources from all systems
- Develop an understanding of systems flow
- Begin to establish a framework for integrated system

Directions:

Concentrate on one categorical system at a time, listing the categorical in column one. Ask each representative the following questions and list the answers accordingly:

- What services do you use to provide residential services? What other system(s) has access to these services?
- What services do you use to provide Community based prevention services? What other system(s) has access to these services?
- What services do you use to provide Community based treatment/intervention services? What other system(s) has access to these services?

Program descriptions and number of clients served and/or units of service may have been assigned as pre-work. If this is the case, list the information in the appropriate column. If not, assign this as a follow up activity for the group.

The link below is to the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) website. This section of the website contains a plan for conducting community resource mapping with a group of stakeholders. Contained in the workshop outline are a power point describing a general overview of resource mapping and mapping worksheets.

WEBSITE LINK: www.ncset.org/tacommunities/levresources/workshop.asp

The Agency's Current Program: What it looks like

Whenever a group of people come together to talk about systems, a great deal of time can be spent clarifying terms, perceptions and functions within an organization. A good strategy when trying to understand the way an agency functions, or how a group would like it to function, is to ask the group if they can draw what their system, or ideal system, looks like. It encourages people to pinpoint the critical decision points before moving forward and gives group members a visual representation of the topic under discussion. It also allows people to easily identify where changes may be needed and to consider what effect those changes will have on the system as a whole.

Activity

Draw a conceptual model for your agency's program, whether it really exists this way or is only in your head at this point. Show or write about how it is, or can be, keyed to agency performance.

Possible Model Elements:

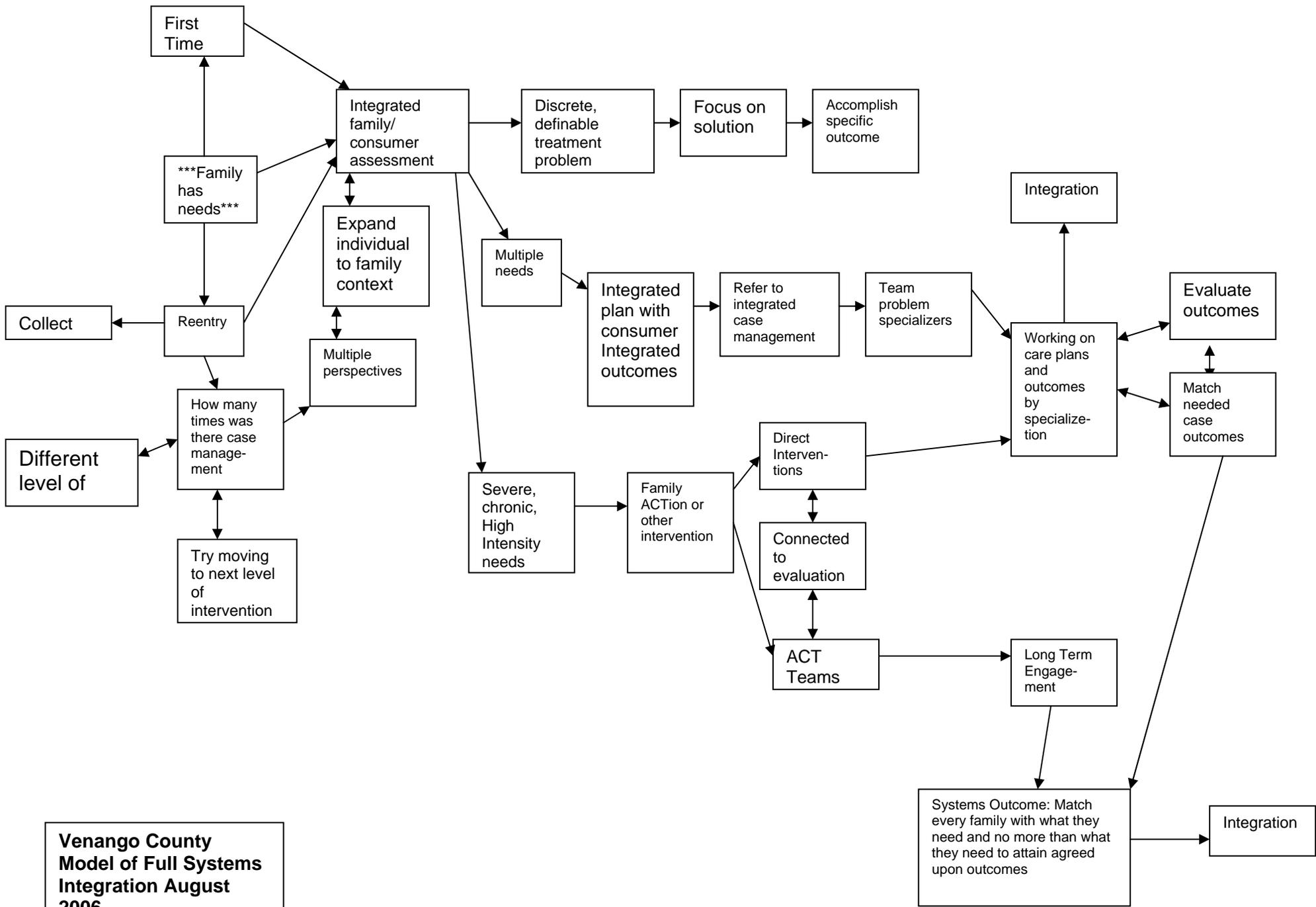
Theoretical foundation, skills, knowledge, participants, feedback loops, coordination with agency priorities, training development, planning, basic training, advanced training, support activities/follow up, organizational levels or departments, program materials, evaluation, accountability, roles and responsibilities, competencies, needs assessment.

Example

Venango County Model

On the next page is a diagram which outlines the flow of services within one agency from the time a family enters the door until services have been completed. It is a fluid document, changing to meet planning needs.

The model that follows is specific to this county's needs and processes. It contains abbreviations and terms that may not fit into other organizations. Each model developed will be unique to the organization's particular process and needs.



**Venango County
Model of Full Systems
Integration August
2006**

Rationale for SWOT Analysis

Before an agency can determine where it would like to go in terms of establishing goals and objectives for a collaborative initiative such as Integrated Children’s Services Plans, it is important first to have a clear and accurate picture of the present state of the agency and its partners. What do they already have working for them and where are the gaps? A SWOT analysis will assist agencies in avoiding common pitfalls such as failing to acknowledge existing efforts, as well as acknowledging challenges that may be present in the current environment. Examining these issues in advance will allow agencies to be proactive, rather than reactive, in their planning efforts.

Example of a SWOT Analysis: The Cullen Center

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director – commitment, enthusiasm, vision and energy; ability to obtain external grants and build partnerships and collaborative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff – professionalism, dedication and commitment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toledo Children’s Hospital – support for center: in kind and technical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Initiatives – Partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results oriented, evidence-based treatment program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community need for programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong vision and mission statements 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of a website and web linkages <input type="checkbox"/> Low visibility <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent base of financial support <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate resources – staff for meeting demand for services <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of succession plan – and plan for cross-training staff
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building permanent community partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connection with juvenile justice system <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connection with public school system <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community initiatives – Partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connection with minority providers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop comprehensive plan that includes five-year budget and that accounts for short and long-term goals and objectives 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community change <input type="checkbox"/> Rising health care costs <input type="checkbox"/> Labor shortage <input type="checkbox"/> Agencies providing similar services (this is more of an opportunity for partnerships than a threat) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain and unstable public funds <input type="checkbox"/> Political environment <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to meet demand for services

Sample Recommendations for Cullen Center

- Establish website and linkages as soon as possible.
- Complete process evaluation and needs assessment.
- Develop strategic plan that includes a five-year budget; that identifies short-term and long-term funding sources; that connects vision, mission and programs; that incorporates long-term and short term goals and objectives; and that serves as a sustainability plan (strategies for obtaining future resources – donations, foundation support, grants, etc.)

Current Initiatives

Key Initiatives: These exist in nearly all human services agencies, under the heading of key innovations, key priorities, and the like. Yet many are essentially prescribed by legislators or regulators, and many others are piled on top of existing priorities. Agencies operating in the Return on Investment mode work to limit and target such priorities and initiatives. They address the most critical gaps against either their strategic customer analysis or their performance capacity.

The organization's Key Initiatives

- What key initiatives have most of your attention? Why?
- What needs to be changed about your organization to achieve the goals of the initiative and why?
- Where did these initiatives come from? What prompted the initiation of the initiative?
- What are the non-negotiable key initiatives, and where are they coming from?
- What would you prioritize if you had the support, means, and capacity?
- Are there things you would like to prioritize that are on the back burner? Why are they there?
- Given the purpose and practices required for these initiatives, what are your biggest internal and environmental strengths and obstacles?
- What related key initiatives have you already implemented?
- What specifically are you already doing, related to these initiatives, in regards to staff development?
- What changes to organizational structure, key processes, methods, jobs, or policies are you making or might you need to make?
- How do these initiatives relate back to the Mission, Vision, Values?
- How will this initiative impact your customers?
- How is this initiative expected to impact your outcomes?
- How does this initiative fit with other service providers in your community?
- What role do your community and your partners play in defining your services related to this initiative?
- How are families and youth involved in defining this initiative and the related services?

System Assessment Overview

- Reinforce that this very work is the essence of leading any organization:
 - Thoroughly understanding where your organizational system is at a given point in time regarding:
 - What comes in (Inputs)
 - What is done (Activities)
 - What goes out (Outputs)
 - How what goes out impacts the environment
 - How that environment in turn impacts the organization (Momentum)
 - Internal and external feedback
 - Determining where the organization needs to be to execute its strategy.
 - Assessing the most critical gaps between an organization's current and desired state.
 - Regarding those gaps, planning what will be done about them, how, when, and in what sequence.

Assessment Area: Inputs

Inputs Defined:

Inputs indicate the amount of resources applied; for example, the amount of funds or number of employees. When related to output or outcome information, the combined information will provide indicators of efficiency/productivity.

Begin assessing environmental support for changes right away, making the system connection and anticipating gaps in key areas as understood by that environment.

People:

- Demographic information to be used is often straight-forward, and may be captured in advance to begin the assessment in good form.
- Profiles of new hires will likely include more consultative skills and experiences.
- Data and perspective regarding skills, knowledge, and experience should also be captured for incumbent staff.
- Consider broader definitions of “people.” Include providers, boards, interns, volunteers, Multi-Disciplinary Teams, foster parents, families and youth, and community partners.

Materials:

- Include physical space and transportation.
- Material needs may include those of the client families and broader communities.

Finances:

- Refer to existing and planned budgets and business cases or proposals.

Technology:

- Regarding closing gaps, emphasize a short and long term solution.
- Regarding interim solutions, assess who is controlling and guiding them and test their integrity.
- Assess the organization’s basic threshold of technology and access to it.
- Include technical service/helpdesk capacity.

QUESTION SET FOR MEASURING INPUTS:

- Who are the people that help you achieve your outcomes and that are necessary to achieve your mission? This group is relative to your community, and is larger than your “in office” staff. This list should include partners as stated above.
- Do those people have the necessary skills knowledge and experience to complete listed goals?
- Do you receive their full cooperation to achieve outcomes? Are their goals and missions aligned with your goals and mission?
- Do you have sufficient numbers of providers to achieve your outcomes?
- Do you have sufficient contracted providers to meet your needs?

- Do you consider your mission, vision, and values when evaluating potential new hires?
- Do you have the physical space and materials (including transportation and communications ability) to accomplish your desired outcomes?
- Do you have the materials needed to meet the needs of client families and the community? What do these include?
- Do you have the financial resources to meet current outcome goals?
- Do you have resources that are as yet untapped to increase revenues to meet outcome goals?
- Are you budgeted for future growth and expansion of services?
- Do you have the technology in place to measure needs, record progress, and measure outcomes?
- Do you have the technology in place to effectively make upgrades in your process and keep track of records?
- Do you have the capacity to increase technological use if necessary?
- Do you have proper staff in place to implement the use of current technology and technology expansion?

Assessment Area: Activities

Activities Defined:

Activities are what the program does with the inputs to fulfill its mission; the tasks employees engage in to produce outputs.

Strategy:

- Refer to strategic readiness work already completed; review in advance.

Structure:

- Use any existing organizational charts.
- Gauge the flexibility of the organization.
- Review broad structural alternatives. What other structures are currently being used by other organizations that perform similar a function?
- How often are role descriptions used and revisited? How?
- Explore the external influence on the structure.
- Evaluate levels of hierarchy. Too many? Too few? Why?
- To test the organizational structure, chart a decision, and include accountability for it, and how communication works within it.

Culture:

- Employ a framework that allows for a diagnosis and gap analysis.
- Use a secondary frame that focuses on diversity and inclusiveness.
- Include staff perceptions, climate studies, and satisfaction surveys.
- Look at culture clashes in terms of strategic partnerships, cliques, or subcultures.

Process:

- Use the decision, accountability, communication and program model charts here.
- Identify key processes by referring to the Strategic Framework.
- Include any Quality Assurance processes that the organization uses.

Method:

- Use the decision, accountability and communication charts here as well.
- Use the culture assessment here as well.
- Ask the client to tell stories or describe how processes play out in reality.

Policy:

- Use any existing policy manuals. When were they last revisited?
- Use the culture assessment here as well. Policies are often an expression of culture.
- Test the notion that policies are useful for general and not exceptional situations.

Development:

- Review any training-related history, competency models, core curriculums and future or ongoing plans.
- Compare to the Strategic “Playbook’s” key initiatives and performance capacity section.

QUESTION SET FOR REVIEWING ACTIVITIES

- Is there a current Organizational Chart? When was it last revised?
- What is our current structure and is it the best structure to meet our current organizational needs and planned outcomes?
- Is the current structure in place strictly because of resistance to change?
- Can we chart a decision through the organizational structure?
- Can we chart the flow of a case through the organizational structure?
- What alternative structures can we consider to meet our outcome objectives?
- Are there cultural forces within the organization at work that are either supportive of the agency’s mission or a complicating factor to creating change?
- Is there a significant communication gap within the agency that relates to culture, cliques, or strategic partnerships?
- What is the current quality assurance process? How has that impacted the organization?
- How is policy communicated to staff?
- Is there a policy manual that the organization currently uses? When was it last reviewed? How is it updated? Are there policy gaps? Is it accessible to staff?
- Who should be reviewing policy and how often? Does this occur?
- How are new staff trained?
- What is the current staff development plan for the immediate future?

Assessment Area: Output

Outputs show the quantity of work activity completed. Outputs are expected to lead to desired outcomes, but by themselves do not tell anything about the outcomes.

OUTPUTS are products of a program's activities such as:

- number of investigated reports
- number of children in foster care
- number of adoptions completed

Outputs

While most agencies define and track performance against a set of indicators for what the agency does with its clients, there are two problems that frequently exist. First, the data that agencies use to track outputs is often flawed; many agency specific and general approaches do not truly capture client specific experiences and longitudinal trends adequately and with the appropriate frequency. Second, outputs, what an organization does with clients, is far different from outcomes, how clients' lives are different. Many organizations blur and cloud these two elements, yet ROI is ultimately only meaningful in regard to outcomes.

QUESTION SET FOR OUTPUTS.

- What are current outputs?
- Do outputs and mission statement align?
- Through what means is output data collected (e.g. tools, use of technology, databases, etc)?
- What trends are seen in outputs?
- Are there non-negotiable performance objectives? What are they?
- What key activities did staff engage in last year?
- How are objectives, outputs and outcomes currently conveyed to staff? To funders? To community partners? To children and families receiving services?
- What outputs are measured and why?
- What is the frequency of these measurements?
- Are there ways to enhance current output measurement?
- In what ways have funding constraints influenced outputs?

Assessment Area: Outcomes

Outcomes are the consequences of the program's or agency's actions. They are not what the program itself did. These are likely to be aspects of the client's condition or behavior that the program seeks to affect. Intermediate outcomes may be events or results that are expected to lead to end outcomes, but are not in themselves "ends". For example, an outcome may be a family's behavioral change, affected by the program. The number of visits to the family's home, however, is not an outcome.

OUTCOMES are results for participants during or after participation in the program such as:

- ability to parent without abuse, resulting in safety for a child.
- reunification of children in foster care, resulting in permanency for a child.
- increased number of youths in care who complete High School, resulting in increased well being for children.

Outcomes

Once an outcomes mentality is truly embraced, it almost necessitates that an agency works and partners with all of its relevant and expert community partners. This better insures the proper definition and tracking of community based outcomes that reach far beyond a single agency's reach and scope. Indeed, an agency working within a Return On Investment driven model will often lead such an effort in their local and state level settings, gathering or developing the required skill sets and building the required culture and practices to do so. This is where an agency's organizational training and development plans are ultimately anchored, if they are to yield a high ROI.

QUESTION SET FOR OUTCOMES: *WHAT IMPACT ARE YOU HAVING ON YOUR CLIENTS AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY?*

- What are your desired outcomes and where did they come from?
- How are your desired outcomes linked to your organization's mission, vision and values? To your policies and procedures? To daily staff activities? To resource allocations?
- Do you have non-negotiable desired outcomes? What are they?
- What trends do you see in your outcomes?
- What outcomes do you measure and why?
- What is the frequency of these measurements?
- Are there ways that you can enhance your current outcome measurement?
- In what ways have funding constraints influenced your outcomes?

Consider for feedback loop discussion questions...

- What will systems partners want from this initiative?

- How is the agency regarded right now by clients and system partners?
How will this impact this initiative as the agency builds upon what is being done now?
- If we are doing our job in a manner that meets a need of the external community, what things will they notice and appreciate? To whom are we accountable in this effort? What should they expect from us?
- If we are achieving the results or outcomes, what will we notice? What will we need to sustain the effort and improve?

Performance Capacity Assessment **Human Resources Capacity Elements**

Human service organizations rely heavily on their human resources to operationalize their mission and vision. An assessment of the organization's Human Resource Capacity requirements and needs includes understanding the following elements:

- Leadership Capacity
- Structure and Culture
- Staffing and Talent Management
- Internal Communication
- Employee Relations
- Performance Management
- Organizational Development
- Rewards Systems and Practices.

The following pages provide a guide to assess these Human Resource Capacity elements. The information gathered can assist an organization in determining where human resources are needed, identifying critical gaps between the organization's current and desired state, and developing, prioritizing and implementing a plan to maximize their human resources.

Performance Capacity Assessment

Human Resources Capacity Elements

Leadership

- Do leaders articulate and model their organization's mission, vision and values both internally and externally, and foster external strategic partnerships that are well-aligned?
- Do leaders actively foster trust, but also make tough calls when individuals within the organization detract from its mission, values, and energy?
- Are leaders aware of and use an effective strategic planning framework that drives their ongoing agenda for setting direction, setting boundaries, and creating alignment?
- Do leaders employ systems thinking to understand and successfully build the organization's inputs, activities, outputs, and impact on the larger environment?
- Do leaders employ key initiatives, goals, measures and action plans to drive strategic alignment, focus, and a results orientation through all levels of the organization, including effective short, medium and long-term goal setting and planning?
- Do leaders effectively create and develop working teams, committees, and taskforces to accomplish major projects and key initiatives?
- Do leaders recognize the importance of effective middle management for organizational performance? Are middle managers mentored, informed about or involved in organizational strategy?
- Does the organization define both effective leadership and management, clarifying the distinctions between them?
- Do leaders understand their general management and stewardship role and responsibility, versus acting as subject matter, policy, or program experts?
- Do leaders use an effective framework and toolkit for leading and managing change, including resistance analysis and effective communication?
- Do leaders understand and use various decision-making and collaboration styles and techniques?

HR Capacity Elements **Structure and Culture**

- Is the organization's strategy clearly linked to mission, vision and values-related initiatives that help align the organization's culture to that strategy?
- Does the organization advance the principle of inclusiveness in culture building and teaming endeavors?
- Are effective new hire programs in place to reinforce the organization's desired culture?
- Does the agency engage in succession planning that supports the organization's desired culture?
- Are the organization's structures, priorities and objectives explicitly linked and aligned to the organization's strategy?
- Does the organization understand the need for all structural initiatives to include key system, key process, key skill and competency assessment and action planning?
- Does the organization understand the fundamental role differences between each tier or level of their organizational structure?
- Does the organization use teams and alliances, including cross-functional teams and alliances with stakeholders?
- Does the organization balance alignment and authority for parts of the organization that are geographically, structurally, or culturally distant or self-contained?

HR Capacity Elements **Staffing**

- Is the agency sufficiently staffed to meet the needs as outlined in the agency's mission?
- Are future headcount and positions needs and expected vacancies projected and calendared?
- Does the agency have a specific staff recruitment and retention program in place to support its staffing needs?
- Does the organization employ an effective applicant assessment process, with selection criteria that is directly tied to the organization's values, performance management system, and leadership or other competency models?
- Are there opportunities for individual mobility across functions, as well as promotion or expansion-in-position for high performers?
- Are effective new hire, transferee, and new leader mentoring programs in place?

HR Capacity Elements **Communication**

- Does the agency have a defined communication plan that includes opportunity for feedback and discussion as appropriate?
- Do communication plans encompass key messages, audiences, purpose, handling misperceptions, and gathering feedback?
- Does the agency use an internal communication program to enhance employees understanding, appreciation, and use of the Human Resources policies and programs?
- Does Information Technology guide the proper and most effective use of the different communication devices in today's workplace, including email, phone, videoconferencing, presentation software, and internet/intranet sites?
- Are community relations and community development initiatives aligned with the organization's external communication plan?

HR Capacity Elements **Employee Relations**

- Are employees informed, respected, listened to and responded to?
- Are there internal assessments and processes in place, resulting in action plans for any significant employee relations gaps?
- Are workspace characteristics aligned with the organization's strategy, culture, structure, and efficiency principles?
- Does the agency provide information related to laws and regulations relevant to the workplace?
- Are unacceptable or terminable actions documented? Are the actions, the consequences, and the steps managers should take to effectively handle them clearly defined?
- Is the amount of rigid policy limited and are managers given discretion when appropriate? Does this create confusion or inconsistencies for staff?
- Are there effective safety and ergonomic plans in place?
- When planning and implementing a restructuring that negatively impacts individual employees, does the organization effectively address those remaining with the agency?
- Are compliance related activities used more broadly and strategically than simply for an audit response?
- Are there effective wellness and work/life balance initiatives in place, including, when appropriate, flexible work arrangements?

HR Capacity Elements **Performance Management**

- Are there effective methods in place to increase ownership of job descriptions and performance goals by the manager and the employee?
- How is data collected when completing employee performance evaluations? Is the data from multiple sources who can provide information from various levels of employee performance?
- Are methods in place to separate discussions related to merit increases from continuous performance feedback?
- Does the agency guide managers to use the full range or scale of performance feedback available to them?
- Are employee performance evaluations completed consistently across work units?
- Who reviews employee performance evaluations and what use are they to the agency?

HR Capacity Elements **Organizational Development (OD)**

- Are OD initiatives targeted and aligned with the organization's strategy and system needs?
- Are OD initiatives set within broader change plans and Human Resources capacity building initiatives?
- Are training and development programs designed to include elements of assessment, consulting, reward, and reassessment?
- Has the organization put in place effective transfer of learning and training Return On Investment strategies and measures around all offered training and development programs?
- Are training and development programs targeted to build the organization's required competencies?
- Are training curriculum and specific training opportunities linked to the job structure and a development planning method?
- Is training curriculum balanced between relationship and task-oriented skills?
- Is training curriculum balanced between the skills required for both current and future organizational needs?
- Is access to training easily understood and does access allow for a high degree of self-help?
- Is there is significant amount of material for independent learning available to staff?
- Does the organization use various methods for the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of ideas between individuals and groups?

HR Capacity Elements

Rewards

- Are reward programs in place to both increase motivation and eliminate distractions?
- Are effective internal marketing programs used to improve the impact of employee compensation and benefits programs?
- Do supervisors and middle managers use high frequency, low cost reward and recognition methods with staff?

Plan Section

Introduction to Plan Section

When moving forward from an initial assessment of an Agency into planning for change, information gathered during the assessment phase is only as useful as the plan that is created from that information. This section of the Resource Guide was developed to assist consultants in taking an Agency from “assessment” to “planning” for change.

The Plan Section begins with a discussion on an Agency’s desired future state. It is not only important to know where you are, but also where you want to go in realistic terms and in relation to your overall Mission, Vision, and Values.

The Plan Section of this guide provides tools for assisting an agency to consider its desired future state and then recognize the gaps between where an agency is today and where it wants to be. This Plan Section will further assist a consultant with leading the effort to prioritize these gaps in terms of what needs to change. It then provides a concrete tool for action planning to fill in those gaps.

At the outset of the planning process, decisions have to be made about who should be involved at this crucial point. A group that is not sufficiently inclusive may make decisions without adequate information, creating a plan that cannot be implemented. Having a planning group that is too large will make progress slow and cumbersome. The planning group must be the right mix of valued stakeholders and staff who have necessary information and perspective to contribute to planning, but who are also capable of seeking feedback from other key staff and stakeholders. A tool to assist the development of the planning team is included in this section.

It will be important throughout the process for the Planners to communicate with the right people to be sure that planning is aligned with Agency needs and realistic goals. Seeking feedback from key staff and stakeholders throughout the planning process from those not on the planning team will allow plan development that is useful. Nothing will hold progress back like the development of a plan that no one wants to implement or is doomed to failure due to lack of involvement of key personnel. While the planning process is in action, this work must be inclusive and subject to valued feedback.

This is not to say that there won’t be times when leaders will need to make some tough and unpopular decisions at points in the process for surely they will, however, this concept of communication is meant to express that leadership must consider the development of staff alignment and participation in the planning process to help assure success.

Planning for Change: The Planning Team

As stated in the introduction to this Plan Section, selecting the correct change planning team is a crucial step for developing a successful change plan. It was noted that a group which is too small may leave the planning team without the right people in the room, and a group that is too large makes change planning difficult.

Beyond just having the right amount of participants, a key aspect of having an effective planning team is selecting the right composition of participants. This process involves finding the right group of people to work together on a shared objective with a high level of trust.

So how do you determine the right participants for the planning team? The planning team should include, at a minimum, people who have the position power to implement change, the expertise to understand the factors and potential consequences of planned change, the credibility to communicate the change plan to the community and stakeholders, and the necessary leadership skills/influence to successfully participate in/lead the group process and implement change.

To assist the agency in developing the planning team, the following chart can be used when considering who should be on the team.

List potential change planning team members on the following chart to determine if all of the necessary components of the planning team are represented.

Name	Position Power	Expertise	Credibility	Leadership

Once potential participants have been identified based on the above characteristics, the leaders of this process should determine whether the candidate would be an asset to the process based on two key characteristics: trust and having a shared objective.

Trust

- Does trust exist between this person and the other designees for the planning group?
- Will trust need to be created with specific ground rules, discussions, or commitments?

Shared Objective

- Does this person have a real desire to make the organization perform at the highest level possible with a sense of urgency?

Once a candidate for the planning team is agreed upon, that person should be approached/invited to join the team with a discussion of any potential obstacles to a productive participation that he or she may face (e.g. time, transportation, cost).

OE Guide Plan Questions

Desired Future State

The desired future state of the organization connects the mission and vision to behaviors and activities. It is the statement of what the organization will look like if it is functioning at its highest capacity. Criteria for gauging successful change must be tangible and measurable, looking at the strengths and gaps which exist in the system that will impact forward movement. If an agency has not already identified its gaps, they must do so before working toward the desired future state of the organization.

The organization will need to look back at their identified gaps, weaknesses or concerns in order to move forward to a concrete idea of what “closing the gaps” looks like. Questions to begin discussion may include:

What do you want this to look like?

- How would you put this into a chart or picture, or into a simple written description?
- What does success look like to internal stakeholders; agency director, managers, supervisors, caseworkers, fiscal and administrative staff?
- What does success look like to external stakeholders; County Commissioners, OCYF, county categorical programs, private providers with county contracts?

What will it take to get to where you want to be?

- What financial and human resources are needed?
- What changes in the agency and/or community culture are needed?
- What skills and knowledge are required?
- What are the political realities?

Consider using the “miracle question” as a tool: If I woke up in the morning and saw my desired future state, what would it look like? Example: If you woke up one morning and your agency had fully integrated services, what would it look like? How would caseworkers recognize it? How would the community know this happened? Ask the same for other stakeholders. What steps do you need to take to get there?

Is this desired future state congruent with the Mission, Vision and Values identified in the Assessment Section?

Gaps and Strengths

Refer back to Assessment Section.

- What gaps were identified?

- What were the organization's strengths?
- What areas for improvement were noted?

Prioritizing

Facilitation work usually needs to be done with the organization to prioritize the actions and planning that will be addressed first. It is helpful to develop two sets of priorities: "quick wins" that can be attained in the near future and longer term goals that will be accomplished in steps, over a defined period of time.

Questions to assist in prioritizing:

- What areas are primarily in the agency's control?
- What areas are out of the agency's control?
- What have we already partially achieved?
- What can we easily achieve, within a short period of time?
- What are the foundational issues and gaps identified during the Systems Assessment that are barriers to achievement of the priorities (as priorities are developing)
- What needs to be worked on first, before moving forward?
- As a particular priority is identified, what anecdotal, qualitative information exists?
- What statistical data exists that supports the anecdotal, qualitative information?
- If data is not available, what other information is needed to start the planning process:

Upon completion of facilitating work with the above questions, it is possible that more information will be needed to make final decisions about prioritizing. If so, agency participants can be assigned "homework" to collect data. They will understand that when they come back with data, prioritizing work will be completed.

Planning for Change

Beginning to develop a Change Strategy/Change Plan:

When prioritizing is complete, discussion will revolve around the question of what needs to change. Agency participants will need to ask themselves and discuss things such as:

- Does the group planning the change have the team skills, problem-solving abilities and facilitation skills needed to achieve the change and/or to provide leadership needed to achieve the change?
- Is there anyone else who needs to be at the table, based on their stake in the outcomes or their influence on change?
- Does work need to be structured or assigned differently in order to accomplish the change?

- Is mentoring of individuals needed?
- What kind of documentation is needed to achieve change?

Feedback Loop Questions

Leadership needs to determine what “true north” is for the organization. Stakeholders need to help determine how that “true north” is achieved. The feedback loop gives people the opportunity to react and to provide input.

There are many stakeholders who are affected by organizational change. Obtaining their ongoing feedback strengthens their buy-in and commitment. It also brings in new ideas and can strengthen the change process itself.

- What will system partners want from this initiative?
- How is the organization regarded right now by stakeholders, including children, youth and families and system partners?
- Who are the people that help the agency achieve outcomes and that are necessary to achieve the mission?
- What things will stakeholders notice and appreciate?
- What will be noticed inside the organization?
- What is needed to sustain the effort and improve?
- Is there a formal and/or informal communication mechanism in place which allows stakeholders to tell the organization how it’s doing?
- If there is not such a mechanism, how should the organization address this concern?

In addition to stakeholder feedback, concrete data is needed to help assess strengths, concerns and successes.

- What data needs to be collected to assess success?
- Is there a method already in place which collects this data?
- How is the data reviewed and analyzed?
- If there is a data gap, what can be done to address this?

Change Plan Template

This Change Plan Template has been developed to serve as a bridge between the surfacing of issues through the assessment process and the development of an action plan. Use the template below to help organize thinking around developing a defined goal and beginning change planning steps to achieve success.

What are the issues surfaced through the assessment process that led to the need for organizational change? What are the input, activity and output issues that need to be addressed?

What will success look like?

In order to achieve success what must come first and what will follow later?

Phase One		
Area of Work	Responsible Group	Boundaries
Phase Two		
Area of Work	Responsible Group	Boundaries

Phase Three		
Area of Work	Responsible Group	Boundaries

Potential Obstacles

(Collecting data, Maintaining stakeholder and staff support, budgetary implications)

Potential Obstacle	Strategy to mitigate it

Organization Action Plan

- I. Vision
- II. Specific Desired Outcome – framed by assessment

The following chart should be developed for each identified goal. The information should be pulled directly from the assessment exercises completed in earlier stages. This is the goal and action planning for all that has been assessed thus far.

Goals will be developed based on the agency’s assessment of where they are now, where they want to be and the gaps that exist between these two points. The identified barriers should also be addressed at this point, making sure to plan action steps around addressing and overcoming the barriers. All goals and associated actions should be measured against the identified mission and vision for the agency to ensure consistency.

Goal Statement

ACTION STEP	BENCHMARK* (Quality)	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	Resources Needed	COMPLETED

Implementation Section

Introduction to Implementation Section

“Implementation is the carrying out, execution, or practice of a plan, a method, or any design for doing something. As such, implementation is the action that must follow any preliminary thinking in order for something to actually happen.”

-Source: *WhatIs.com*

This definition of implementation summarizes what the hope is for this section of the resource guide: that action will follow planning. Many hours of assessment and planning are oftentimes left in the meeting room due to the lack of a successful implementation effort.

Implementation is usually the phase of change planning that would have a consultant lessen their role and assume that organizational leadership will take the plan and move forward. Unfortunately, without sufficient support, implementation can become a time of frustration and failure as easily as success and celebration for leadership teams.

This section begins with a description (complete with example) of how to develop a “Strategic Playbook” designed to support implementation and maintenance of organizational change that will serve as a supporting resource after the consultant has completed the task and the organization moves forward within their new structure or environment. Also within this section, tools have been designed to support the consultant to find the right blend of turning tasks over to a leadership group while still providing sufficient support to see the project through. The skilled consultant will use these tools, including ideas for discussing successes and barriers, processes for communicating change plans, and thoughts for considering data collection that support implementation when leaders struggle to take a plan from paper to practice.

Proper implementation efforts will not always lead to success. Unexpected barriers and restraining forces will inevitably arise and challenge even the most well thought out change plans. Achievement of planned outcomes and goals is much more likely to occur with the proper understanding that communication and revised planning are key elements of implementation.

The Strategic Playbook

The Strategic Playbook is an Organizational Effectiveness tool using information gathered during the Strategic Readiness Review, as well as from other processes. It contains a number of set pieces like the organization's vision, mission, and values. It contains information on organizational structure and roles, communications plans, team and group charters, and major programs and initiatives. Agencies may choose to add any number of unique elements, as well. Meeting schedules, policies and guidelines, physical plant maps, and any document that provides clarity should be considered. To quote the Training Program's Strategic Playbook, ". . .this organization must be grounded in a common set of values and beliefs. A structure for operating must also be provided in order for staff to feel empowered to perform at their highest level. This playbook is designed to share with you our core values, beliefs, and a basic structure by which we operate."

Value and Use

Steven Covey, in his best seller, *Principle Centered Leadership*, advocates the use of a "compass" in today's world. He suggests that a "compass" is better than a "map" since "a map may be dated and inaccurate by the time it's printed." He also draws another analogy when he says that today's leaders are often operating in uncharted territory or waters with no existing map of the territory. He suggests we use a "compass" to orient people "to the coordinates" and to "indicate a course or direction" regardless of terrain or conditions.

Continuing the metaphor, Covey says that a "map provides description, but the compass provides more vision and direction." Finally, he drives the point home when he says: "An accurate map is a good management tool, but a compass is a leadership and an empowerment tool."

Most of our offices are cluttered with numerous volumes of "maps" scattered about the desks and cabinets. Each contains revisions and overlays . . . many of which are not connected to the original map. To make matters worse, the heavy map binders cannot be carried by staff when they need them most. When faced with a tough choice, the staff "navigates" as best they can in the absence of supervision. Often staff and families become hopelessly "lost" without an accurate and accessible "map".

That's the value of the Strategic Playbook. Properly constructed, it can be the "compass" pointing north no matter what the terrain or conditions. The Playbook becomes the tool that, described by Covey, "orients people to the coordinates and indicates a course or direction even in forests, deserts, seas, and open, unsettled terrain."

The Strategic Playbook provides a strong, magnetic draw toward vision, mission, values, outcomes, and purpose. The administrator who creates and uses this tool with staff, families, and stakeholders sends a clear message to all about where the organization is headed, and how it will get there.

Use with staff—Staff get a clear idea of the “big picture” and have a tool that reorients them to why we do what we do. The Playbook becomes a quick reference to guide and help them act in the absence of direction. It provides the parameters of authority, decision making, and resource expenditure. When staff has a clear understanding of the scope of their authority and responsibility, they can act to resolve problems and create solutions that work for children, youth, families and the organization.

Use with families—Families benefit from staff who make decisions and find solutions to problems rather than stick to archaic procedural guidelines. Staff who understand what they can do are free to work with families collaboratively and seek results that are in their best interest. Children, youth and families win when agencies stay focused on outcomes and results instead of hiding behind difficulties and procedures.

Use with stakeholders and community—if the agency doesn't set a reasonable expectation for its work, the community will create its own. Often times this is the problem that develops between the agency and the community it serves. Unrealistic expectations (no children will be harmed or die because of abuse or neglect) are set for the agency, and when they aren't met, the community feels they've been lied to and unprotected. The Strategic Playbook is a wonderful tool to put the agency out there in language the community can understand. It's broad enough to give assurance that someone is at the helm, but doesn't weigh them down in burdensome bureaucratic process. It lets the community know the extent to which they can rely on the agency, and what the agency can REALISTICALLY be expected to handle.

The Strategic Playbook is a valuable tool to be referenced during implementation, or when changes to policy and practice are considered. Very few tools have such versatility and use while doing essentially one task . . . pointing the way.

Sample Strategic Playbook Table of Contents

The following Table of Contents is partial content from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program's Strategic Playbook and is provided as an example for content that could be developed by an organization while implementing and maintaining change. This guide may be built upon or changed based on the needs and structure of the organization. The Playbook should be a dynamic guide, subject to change as the organization changes, but stable enough to be a resource for communication and support of organizational leadership

- 1) Introduction
 - i. History of organization
 - ii. Current assessment
- 2) The Organization
 - i. Mission
 - ii. Vision
 - iii. Values
 - iv. Our Hallmarks
 - v. Strategy Graphic with Explanation
- 3) Organizational Structure
 - i. General Description of Structure
 - ii. Organizational Chart
 - iii. Organizational Levels
 - iv. Description of Levels
- 4) Organizational Roles
 - i. General Description of Roles
 - ii. Decision/Responsibility Chart
 - iii. Team Roles
 1. Executive Team
 2. Unit Lead Team
 3. Administrative Assistant Team
 - iv. Unit Roles
 - v. Individual Roles
- 5) Meeting Schedule
 - i. Monthly Meeting Schedule
 - ii. Executive Team Meetings with Standing Agenda
 - iii. Staff Meetings with Standing Agenda
 - iv. Unit Meetings
- 6) Communication Strategy/Plan
- 7) Charters
 - i. General Description of Charters
 - ii. Template for Charter Development
- 8) Practice Initiatives
- 9) Guidelines
- 10) Human Resources
- 11) Glossary of Terms and Acronyms
- 12) Bibliography

Communicating the Change Strategy

Communicating the change strategy to staff and key stakeholders is a major component to successful implementation of change planning. Neglecting communication of the purpose and desired outcome of the change plan could cause resistance, confusion, and ultimately failure of the change plan. Conversely, strategic communication of the plan, the desired outcomes, and the expected benefits of the change to appropriate parties should support the implementation and remove potential barriers that the lack of communication would create.

Creating Stewardship

One goal when developing a communication plan is creating *"Stewardship"* among staff. *"Stewardship"* occurs when everyone in the organization:

- Shares in successes and failures.
- Understands and is responsible for the larger whole.
- Focuses on building the organization's capacity for success in the future.
- Uses the organization's resources efficiently.
- Operates with the understanding that resources and information belong to the whole organization, not people or divisions.

Creating *"stewardship"* of the change process among staff begins with the communication that comes from leadership and the planning team.

Development of a plan for communicating the change strategy should be one task of the planning team as it looks toward implementation. Communication regarding the change plan will come in two forms:

- 1) Overt attempts to "spread the word" and verbally communicate the change.
- 2) Subtle behaviors of organizational leadership that demonstrate the leader's position on the organizational change, also known as the "free tools of leadership".

"Spreading the word" will allow the planning team and organizational leadership the ability to present their vision and build support for the change by telling people about it, but it is often the behaviors that leaders show, purposefully or not, that staff will notice and follow.

Spreading the word

The planning team should ask themselves the following question:

Now that we have some strategies for change, how will we communicate them?

With this question in mind, the planning team should develop a plan for communicating the change strategy using the following tips:

- Communicate the vision or any or all parts of the strategy at staff meetings, in memos, through posters etc.
- Include elements in staff performance evaluations that assess the extent to which they innovate their practices to directly support the change strategy.
- Use a portion of every staff meeting to discuss the work of the unit in relation to the change strategy.
- Use the assessment of the current state and the desired future state after the change to create a sense of urgency about the change.
- Inform staff about client outcomes and involve employees in data gathering and analysis.

Using the “Free” tools of leadership

The “Free” tools of leadership are:

- Behavior
- Time
- Attention
- Decisions
- Assignments

Assist the planning team and organization leaders in answering the following questions:

- 1) How can you use your own behavior to create stewardship?
- 2) How can you use your own time to create stewardship?
- 3) What can you pay attention to in order to create stewardship?
- 4) What decisions can you make to create or embed stewardship?
- 5) What assignments can you give to create or embed stewardship?

These “free” tools of leadership can be the most effective way of communicating and eventually implementing change by having leaders who model the behaviors that they are looking to create. Leaders who talk about change, but whose behaviors and decisions indicate otherwise to staff, will prove to be a barrier to implementation of change.

By using a planned strategy of communication to staff and key stakeholders that is balanced with both words and deeds, the implementation of a well developed change plan will have every opportunity for success.

Data Collection

Data collection is essential to decision making in any organization because it will guide the work of the group. Data is most useful when it is not just gathering information for information's sake, but when it is information that speaks to progress on outcomes or deliverables. Information tells the status of each system component and helps to make decisions about resource utilization and movement toward goals. The value of information should be related to ultimately understanding outcomes. By gathering information relative to desired outcomes such as safety, permanence and well being, it can be understood where one stands in relation to benchmarks to reach those goals. These benchmarks should mirror those developed in the "planning" process.

Information regarding data collection will be presented more thoroughly in the Evaluation and Monitoring Section. What is important to note at this time is that understanding the need for data collection and beginning that process should be part of the planning phases and must be part of change implementation. Prior to actual implementation of change, the consultant will have already considered what data will be needed to monitor the success of change. At a minimum, the planning team should be able to answer the following questions prior to implementation:

- 1) What is the desired outcome?
- 2) What type of data is required to assess progress towards that outcome?
- 3) Is that information systems data or client related data?
- 4) Is it currently collected? If so, how? By whom?
- 5) If the needed data is not collected how can that be accomplished?
- 6) What resources will be necessary to collect the data? (time, money, etc.)
- 7) How is the data used?
- 8) Who is the data shared with?
- 9) How does the data impact current and future decisions?

Example: *(from Foundations for Leadership, PA Child Welfare Training Program)*

Outcome:

Every child referred to the placement unit will be placed in a safe, approved and culturally compatible home with permanency option within "X" days of referral.

What data could be useful?

- Number of referrals
- Number of homes recruited
- Number of homes approved with complete safety check
- Number of culturally compatible and non-compatible matches
- Number of placement disruptions
- Reason for placement disruption

Current methods of data collection:

- Number of referrals is tracked in the county data base
- Number of disruptions are recorded in case records
- Number of homes recruited in the county data base

What is missing?

- Information about the current status of foster care or kinship care homes
- Reason for disruption
- Number and percentage of placement matches that are culturally compatible

By knowing what data will need to be collected prior to completing change implementation, an organization can be fully prepared to collect data at the optimal time (at time of referral, at time of acceptance to program, prior to case closure) and will not have to be retrospective in nature.

Once again, this information is presented in greater detail in the Evaluation and Monitoring Section of this guide.

Implementation: Successes and Barriers

As stated earlier, hours of planning work may result in failed or no implementation. This dynamic could occur for many reasons, but one pitfall to be aware of is the fact that the transition from planning to implementation is often accompanied by the transition of the workload from the consultant/leader to new parties who suddenly become responsible for the successful implementation of other people's planning efforts.

This transition of responsible parties is often accompanied by the sense that the real work (assessment and planning) of leadership is done and all that has to happen is for the plan to be followed.

If the transitions resulting in a changed leadership and responsibility are not monitored with the same vigor of the assessment and planning process, it is likely that the plan will not successfully move from paper to practice.

The successful implementation process will include not only the timelines, benchmarks, and responsible people on the action plan, but will include a process by which implementation is frequently discussed and reviewed and successes and failures are exposed.

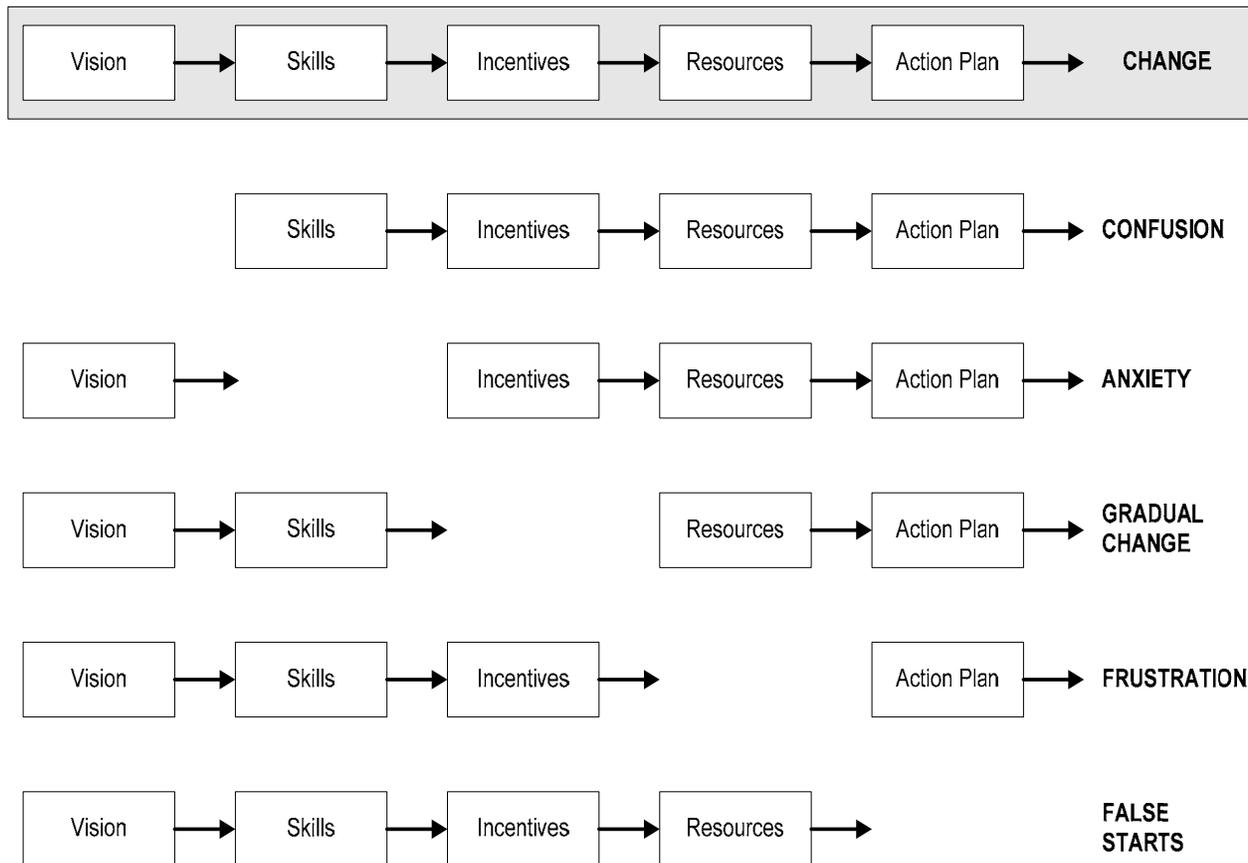
During implementation, the consultant who has successfully guided the planning team to implementation will continue to pull the team together to review progress DURING implementation. This may be daily, weekly, monthly, or whenever necessary depending on the individual project, but it cannot wait until change was supposed to have occurred.

Bringing the planning team, organizational leadership, and responsible parties together on a regular basis will allow the consultant to examine the following questions and make use of the answers:

- 1) What successes have been achieved through the change planning process?
- 2) What made the successes possible?
- 3) Have new driving forces been identified?
- 4) How should we celebrate these successes?
- 5) What barriers have been encountered in implementing change plan activities?
- 6) What are some solutions to these barriers?
- 7) Were these barriers expected or unexpected?
- 8) What new barriers can we expect as a result of this new information?
- 9) Have additional gaps been identified since the initial assessment as a result of implementation?
- 10) What unexpected restraining forces have we encountered?

Change plans and accompanying communication and implementation plans may change as successes and barriers and driving and restraining forces are discussed, Below is a chart entitled “Managing Complex Change” that could be used with groups who are having difficulty determining “what’s missing” or what problems are occurring during implementation.

Managing Complex Change



Source: Human Services Collaborative (1996). Building Local Systems of Care: Strategically Managing Complex Change. (Adapted from T. Knosler (1991), TASH Presentations) Washington D.C.

Below are some further explanations of the pieces of change planning that, when missing, could potentially lead to the given problems.

- **Vision** - A clear vision must be established so that staff, stakeholders and the community clearly understand where the organization is going and why. Without a clear vision, there is often confusion.
- **Skills** - Staff may have concern about the new knowledge and skills they will need to support implementing the change. A plan should clearly address how these skills will be developed. Without proper skills, staff often have anxiety regarding change.
- **Incentives** - In order to buy-in to change, staff must address the “what’s in it for me?” When individuals see how the change will benefit them, their buy-in will increase. Without staff incentives, there is often gradual change.
- **Resources** - Understanding where the resources will come from in order to support the change will reinforce with staff, stakeholders, and the community that the change will be able to be supported. Without proper resources, there is often frustration.
- **Action Plan** - A written plan of action must be given to staff, stakeholders, and the community. This will show everyone that the change is clearly thought out. Without a proper action plan, there are often false starts or a “treadmill” effect.

In conclusion of this section, it is important to note that, although implementation occurs after initial assessment and planning, it is not the end of assessment and planning. During this dynamic time of the change process, assessment and planning continue so that change can be a positive, useful, and outcomes directed experience.

Evaluation and Monitoring Section

Introduction to Evaluation and Monitoring

There are many reasons why organizations attempt to monitor and evaluate change implementation including: reporting requirements, compliance monitoring, questions regarding sustainability, questions regarding practice improvements, quality assurance, identification of gaps and trends, outcome/impact assessments, fiscal planning, resource allocation, and questions about the need for expanding services.

All of these reasons are valid and important and speak to the concept of evaluation to assure successful use of inputs and activities. Human services work is ever changing and unpredictable. This requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation to avoid creating poor outcomes for children and families, to allow change implementation to be reassessed “in process” and to assure positive outcomes as planned.

Evaluation processes go beyond simply recording results, enabling organizations to define and utilize benchmarks and indicators to measure how well services are leading to results (outcomes). The Evaluation and Monitoring section of the Organizational Effectiveness Guide provides information to assist child welfare agencies in developing, implementing, and monitoring an effective and efficient evaluation plan.

As there are many types of evaluation processes, each leading to different types of measurements, this section begins with suggestions and questions to consider in the development of an evaluation plan. The remaining segments; Creating an Evaluation Team, Examining Outcomes and Objectives, Collecting Data, Choosing Instruments, Analyzing and Using Data, and Disseminating Results, provide a framework to guide an agency through the key steps of an evaluation plan.

A sample evaluation plan worksheet follows this introduction. This worksheet is to be used as a resource for developing an evaluation and monitoring plan and to record decisions as are they are made.

Once the organization has considered each component and/or completed the worksheet, it may be helpful to formulate the evaluation decisions into a specific action plan. (See Plan Section for a sample action plan.) Evaluation resources are referenced at the end of this section.

Overarching Suggestions for Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Have an evaluation plan ready to implement before starting new initiatives and services.
2. Include stakeholders, internal and external, in your evaluation planning.
3. Consider the utility, relevance, practicality as well as scientific reliability and validity in the evaluation process. Don't balk at evaluation because it seems far too "scientific."
4. There is no "perfect" evaluation design. It's far more important to start to evaluate, then to wait to perfect the process. Evaluation and monitoring is an active and dynamic process.
5. Use a variety of evaluation methods.
6. Don't interview, examine or just report the successes. A great deal will be learned about the program by understanding its failures, dropouts, barriers to implementation, etc.
7. Don't throw away evaluation results once a report has been generated. Results don't take up much room, and they can provide precious information later when trying to understand changes in the program or over time.

(adapted from McNamara, Carter (1997-2007). Pitfalls to Avoid, Adapted from the Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation. Retrieved May 28, 2007, from www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm).

Outcome Evaluation Plan Worksheet

The following worksheet has been included with this OE Guide to assist with development of a work plan for monitoring and evaluating organizational effectiveness work. This worksheet is arranged in the same chronological order as the rest of this section and can be used in conjunction with the follow up information/questions in this section. A blank worksheet is also provided for use when developing a plan.

Evaluation Component	Considerations	Decisions- Agency Evaluation Plan
Creating an Evaluation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? • Cross system? • Responsibilities/tasks • Meeting how often 	
Examining Outcomes/Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates • ID Outcomes and Objectives • Valid and measurable • Set benchmarks and output measures 	
Collecting Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods • Baselines • Comparisons • Consider cost and feasibility 	
Choosing Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tools • Agency developed • Easily administered • Easily interpreted • Cost effective 	
Analyzing and Using Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID variables demographics • Statistics • Explain unusual data • Practice improvement plans 	
Disseminating Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format • Presentations • Review by stakeholders • Publication 	

Outcome Evaluation Plan Worksheet

Evaluation Component	Considerations	Decisions- Agency Evaluation Plan
Creating an Evaluation Team		
Examining Outcomes/Objectives		
Collecting Data		
Choosing Instruments		
Analyzing and Using Data		
Disseminating Results		

Creating an Evaluation Team

The first step in developing an outcome based evaluation/monitoring plan is to determine who will be involved in developing the plan and how and when they will be involved. Ideally the team will integrate research and practice and include agency staff, cross-systems partners, and primary stakeholders: those whose lives are affected by the organization's services, including children, youth and families. Secondary stakeholders, those people who have decision making power regarding the agency, such as commissioners, licensing representatives, etc. should participate. It is also helpful to have someone on the team who is knowledgeable about research practices.

Key questions to consider in creating your evaluation team include:

1. How will your stakeholders, primary and secondary, be included in the development of your evaluation plan? (See Assessment Section for assistance in determining key stakeholders.)
2. How many people should be included on the Team?
3. How often will the Evaluation Team meet?
4. How will Evaluation Team members be oriented to and engaged in the evaluation processes, agency goals, etc?
5. What roles will the Evaluation Team play in implementing, monitoring and updating the evaluation plan?
6. Who will provide leadership and direction for the Team?
7. Should "outside" technical assistance be sought or is there enough expertise available within the agency?
8. To whom will the team provide feedback?
9. When and how often will feedback be provided to the larger stakeholder group?
10. Is separate funding needed for this piece of the work?

Examining Outcomes in Relation to Objectives

Programs and services are generally established to meet one or more specific goals (outcomes). Overarching child welfare goals include the safety, permanency and well being for children and families but, as explained earlier in the OE Guide, outcomes are more specific and measurable than that. Central to outcome based evaluation is examination of the organization's stated outcomes in relation to the agency's mission, vision, values and goals.

To effectively evaluate progress towards expected outcomes, organizations must identify the outcomes and/or objectives to evaluate early in the process. Once that has been completed, indicators or benchmarks should be set that indicate progress in achieving the outcome or objective. Examining stated outcomes and objectives, as defined in the planning stage, will assist in defining the purpose of the organization's evaluation plan.

The primary message here is that evaluation of program change will be most effective if it is considered during the planning stage (asking how success will be recognized), and included as a process during the implementation stage (considering what information needs to be gathered as changes are implemented and gathering that information).

It is assumed that the organization has already completed some work to establish outcomes. (See the Plan Section for more information on establishing outcomes, benchmarks and objectives.) Organizational outcomes, both short and long term, can be articulated in a logic model and/or included in a change plan.

Questions to consider when examining outcomes and objectives:

1. How were the outcomes/objectives established?
2. Are the established outcomes in measurable terms?
3. Are the outcomes expressed beyond just a measurement of outputs? (community benefits, staff benefits)
4. Is a measurement of outputs sufficient to measure progress? (money saved, number of children in foster care, percentage improvement)
5. What were the indicators or benchmarks to assess the organization's progress?
6. Are the outcomes/objectives being completed in the specified timeframes?
7. Are adequate resources (staff, money, training, etc.) allocated toward achieving the outcome/objective?
8. Are the identified outcomes/objectives still relevant and necessary?
9. Have priorities changed and why?
10. Should additional outcomes/objectives be added?
11. How should outcomes/objectives be established in the future?

12. Is there progress toward achieving the outcomes? Have some benchmarks been achieved and not others?
13. What barriers were identified during implementation that were not expected? How did these barriers affect success/failure?
14. Is further action planning needed to achieve success?
15. What unexpected outcomes were achieved? (better agency teamwork, new staff attracted)
16. Was the return on investment regarding the program change as expected, better, or worse?
17. Can this information be easily reported to stakeholders?
18. Does this change need to be monitored over time? If yes, are the people and resources in place to accomplish that?
19. If change needs to be monitored over a long period of time, can progress be measured over increments during the time period?

Collecting Data

Strategies for data collecting should be identified when the organization has completed the process of examining identified outcomes and objectives. The overall goal in selecting evaluation method(s) is to get the most useful information to key decision makers in the most cost-effective and realistic fashion.

This section includes questions to consider when determining your data collection method as well as a review of evaluation methods. A variety of methods may be utilized depending on the agency's evaluation needs and available resources.

It may be helpful for organizations to consider different levels of evaluation in order to determine their specific evaluation needs. Donald Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1994). *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler) describes Four Levels of Evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior/transfer, and results.

Reaction evaluation assesses how participants perceived or felt about the program or service (satisfaction surveys). Seeking participant feedback is usually easy to administer, cost effective and allows for quality assurance and program improvements.

Learning evaluation attempts to assess whether participants learned new skills, knowledge, or attitude. Measurement at this level is more difficult and laborious than level one. Methods range from formal to informal testing to team assessment and self-assessment. Pre and post tests are sometimes conducted to determine program effectiveness.

Behavior evaluation attempts to measure participant transfer of the new information, skill, or attitude in daily activities. Behavior evaluation is also time intensive. It may be difficult to separate the multiple variables that effect changes in an individual and to know how long it will take for participants to incorporate new behaviors into their lives.

Results evaluation attempts to measure the impact of the program or service. Organizations want to know if participants benefited from the program to measure their effectiveness. Results evaluation, like all evaluation, is connected to the mission of the organization. Results evaluation in child welfare attempts to answer questions about improved safety, greater stability/permanency, and enhanced well-being needs. (See Child and Family Service Review and/or the Pennsylvania Quality Service Review tools for specific indicators.) Results evaluations may also include increased productivity, improved quality and cost effectiveness. Results evaluation is labor intensive and sometimes includes a representative control group, if available, for comparative purposes. Like the

behavior evaluation level, it is sometimes difficult to directly link results to a specific intervention.

Consider the following questions when determining your data collection method (adapted from McNamara, Carter (1997-2007). *Overall Goal in Selecting Methods*, Adapted from the *Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation*. Retrieved May 28, 2007, from www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm).

1. What information is needed to make current decisions about a product or program?
2. Of this information, how much can be collected and analyzed in a low-cost and practical manner, e.g., using questionnaires, surveys and checklists?
3. How accurate will the information be? (Reference the “Data Collection Methods at a Glance” table for pros and cons of methods.)
4. Will the methods get all of the needed information?
5. What additional methods should and could be used if additional information is needed?
6. Will the information appear as credible to decision makers, e.g., to funders or top management?
7. Will the nature of the audience conform to the methods? Will they fill out questionnaires carefully, engage in interviews or focus groups, let you examine their documentations, etc.?
8. Who can administer the methods now or is training required?
9. How can the information be analyzed?
10. If you are gathering information directly from participants, consider regulations protecting human subjects, confidentiality, and informed consent. Some organizations are required to complete Internal Review Board processes before administering any evaluation processes.

The following information (pages 61-65) provides specific factors to consider when selecting a data collection method. It has been used in its entirety from Venango County Pennsylvania’s Collaborative Board Community Wide Performance Measurement and Outcomes Evaluation Process (October 2005-Venango County Pennsylvania). This report from Venango County sites [Getting to Outcomes](#), 2004, pages 123-127, by Professor David Fetterman as the primary source of this information. The Venango Collaborative report references the following website to seek further information:
www.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html

The table below highlights the strengths and weaknesses of various data collection methods. These include both quantitative and qualitative methods.

- *Quantitative methods answer who, what, where, and how much.*
Emphasizing numbers, they target larger groups of people and are more

structured and standardized (the same exact procedure is used with each person) than qualitative methods.

- *Qualitative methods answer why and how and usually involve talking to or observing people.* Emphasizing words instead of numbers, qualitative methods present the challenge of organizing the thoughts and beliefs of those who participate into themes. Qualitative evaluations usually target fewer people than quantitative methods.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AT A GLANCE

Methods	Pros	Cons	Costs	Time to Complete	Response Rate	Expertise Needed
Interviews – face to face and open ended	Gather in-depth, detailed info.; info. can be used to generate survey questions	Takes much time and expertise to conduct and analyze; potential interview bias possible	Inexpensive if done in house; can be expensive to hire interviewers and/or transcribers	About 45 min. per interview; analysis can be lengthy depending on method	People usually agree if it fits into their schedule	Requires good interview/conversation skills; formal analysis methods are difficult to learn
Open-ended questions on a written survey	Can add more in-depth, detailed info. to a structured survey	People often do not answer them; may be difficult to interpret meaning of written statements	Inexpensive	Only adds a few more minutes to a written survey; quick analysis time	Moderate to low	Easy to content analyze
Participant observation	Can provide detailed info. and an "insider" view	Observer can be biased; can be a lengthy process	Inexpensive	Time consuming	Participants may not want to be observed	Requires skills to analyze the data
Archival research	Can provide detailed information about a program	May be difficult to organize data	Inexpensive	Time consuming	Participants may not want certain documents reviewed	Requires skills to analyze the data
Focus groups	Can quickly get info. about needs, community attitudes and norms; info. can be used to generate survey questions	Can be difficult to run (need a good facilitator) and analyze; may be hard to gather 6 to 8 people together	Inexpensive if done in house; can be expensive to hire facilitator	Groups themselves last about 1.5 hours	People usually agree if it fits into their schedule	Requires good interview/conversation skills; technical aspects can be learned easily
Observation	Can see a program in operation	Requires much training; can influence participants	Inexpensive; only requires staff time	Quick, but depends on the number of observations	Not an issue	Need some expertise to devise coding scheme
Self-administered surveys	Anonymous; inexpensive; easy to analyze; standardized, so easy to compare with other data	Results are easily biased; misses info.; drop out is a problem for analysis	Moderate	Moderate, but depends on system (mail, distribute at school)	Moderate, but depends on system (mail has the lowest)	Little expertise needed to give out surveys; some expertise needed to analyze and interpret the data
Telephone surveys	Same as paper and pencil but allow you to target a wider area and clarify responses	Same as paper and pencil but miss people without phones (those with low incomes)	More than self-administered	Moderate to high	More than self-administered	Need some expertise to implement a survey and to analyze the data
Face-to-face structured surveys	Same as paper and pencil, but you can clarify responses	Same as paper and pencil but requires more time and staff time	More than telephone and self-administered surveys	Moderate to high	More than self-administered survey (same as telephone survey)	Need some expertise to implement a survey and to analyze and interpret the data
Archival trend data	Quick; inexpensive; a lot of data available	Comparisons can be difficult; may not show change over time	Inexpensive	Quick	Usually very good but depend on the study that collected them	No expertise needed to gather archival data, some expertise needed to analyze and interpret the data
Record review	Objective; quick; does not require program staff or participants; preexisting	Can be difficult to interpret, often is incomplete	Inexpensive	Time consuming	Not an issue	Little expertise needed; coding scheme may need to be developed

Quantitative Data Collection Methods

Surveys:

Surveys are a collection of questions that are asked of each person in the same exact manner, and each one of those questions usually has a fixed set of possible responses from which to choose. Surveys can be administered by mail, face to face, or over the telephone, but they all share these same properties. The benefit of surveys is that since respondents all face the same questions, their answers can be easily compared.

It is always better to use existing measures whenever possible because those measures have many of the kinks worked out already. If you are conducting a program from the evidence-based or best practice literature, it is possible to use measures that have already been created for the program (even if you are modifying it). When contacting program developers for measures, be sure to specify your intentions for their use, because developers often have many different measures for different research purposes. Also, make sure to ask for the scoring information. If there are no measures that come with the program, your best practice research may lead you to other relevant measures that have been used by similar programs addressing the content of your program. Finally, if there is no survey available, you may want to create one yourself.

Although there are volumes written about how to design and administer surveys, The American Statistical Association has several brochures about survey research on its web site, <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/whatsurvey.html>, including the following:

- How to plan a survey.
- How to collect survey data.
- Designing a questionnaire (another name for a survey).
- Telephone surveys.
- Mail surveys.
- Pre-testing surveys (administering the survey to a few people to work out the bugs).

Archival Trend Data:

Archival data already exist. There are national, regional, state, and local sources (e.g., health departments, law enforcement agencies, the Centers for Disease Control). These data are usually inexpensive and may be fairly easy to obtain. Several examples include rates of DUI arrests, unemployment rates, and juvenile drug arrest rates. Many sources can be accessed using the Internet. However,

you may have little choice in the data format since someone else probably collected the data for another purpose. *It will probably require most quality programs several years to change archival trend data indicators* (if it is even feasible) since archival trend data usually cover larger groups (schools, communities, states).

Record Review:

A record review uses existing records from different groups or agencies (e.g., arrest reports, medical records) as a data source. Record reviews usually involve counting the frequency of different behaviors. One program counted the number of times adolescents who had been arrested for underage drinking stated they obtained alcohol by using false identification.

Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Focus Groups:

Data from focus groups often yield “qualitative” (e.g. text) data as opposed to surveys, which usually yield “quantitative” (e.g. numerical) data. Qualitative data usually have rich descriptions of a topic area, such as satisfaction with a program. Focus groups are in-depth interviews with a small number of carefully selected people brought together to provide their opinions. Unlike the one-way flow of information in a one-on-one interview, focus groups generate data through the give and take of group discussion. Listening as people share and compare their different points of view provides a wealth of information - not just about what they think, but why they think the way they do. Therefore, focus groups are an excellent method to learn about attitudes and get suggestions for improvement.

Observations:

Observations involve watching others (sometimes without their knowledge) and systematically recording the frequency of their behaviors according to preset definitions (e.g. number of times 7th graders in one school expressed anti-smoking sentiments during lunch and recess). This method requires a great deal of training for observers to be sure each behavior is recorded in the same way and to prevent their own feelings from influencing the results.

Unstructured Interviews:

Similar to a focus group, but with just one person, an unstructured interview is designed to obtain very rich and detailed information via an interviewer who uses a set of open-ended questions. The interviewer guides the participant through the questions but allows the interview conversation to flow naturally, encouraging

the participant to answer in his or her own words. The interviewer will often ask follow-up questions to clarify responses and to get more information. It takes a great deal of skill to conduct an unstructured interview and analyze the data. It is important to define criteria that determine who will be interviewed if you decide to use unstructured interviews.

Open-Ended Questions on a Self-Administered Survey:

Usually at the end of a self-administered survey, open-ended questions ask those being surveyed to write their responses in sentences or phrases. Content of these data can be analyzed similarly to focus group data (e.g. look for themes).

Participant Observation:

This method involves joining in the process that is being observed to provide more of an “insider’s” perspective. Participant-observers then record the processes that occur as well as their own personal reactions to the process. This method produces detailed information, but it takes time (e.g., to gain trust, to gather enough data) and can be biased by the observer’s personal feelings. The information is analyzed like focus group data (e.g. look for themes).

Choosing Data Collection Instruments

The next step in the evaluation process is to choose or develop the data collection instrument(s) based on the evaluation method. Instruments must be chosen or developed carefully to ensure the data received is valid, reliable, and applicable. An instrument is considered reliable when it consistently and dependably measures some concept with accuracy. An instrument is considered valid when it closely corresponds to the concepts it was designed to measure.

It is best to use existing instruments, if available and cost effective, as they have already been tested for reliability and validity.

Questions to consider in deciding on an evaluation instrument include:

1. Is there an existing commercial instrument that the organization can use to gather needed information?
2. Is the instrument cost effective? Consider cost if purchasing the instrument. Also consider staff training, implementation and analysis.
3. Is the instrument easy to administer?
4. Is the instrument easy to interpret?
5. Is the instrument user friendly?
6. Will the instrument be piloted before full implementation?
7. What demographic information will be collected and for what purpose?
8. Will I need quantitative data for the people that I'm reporting to?

The following are some considerations and suggestions if the organization decides to develop their own evaluation instrument:

- Be brief
- Use simple and grammatically correct language
- Watch out for words with double meanings or words that are easily confused
- Avoid complex sentences
- Avoid negative questions (do you not like...)
- Minimize yes/no questions
- Use at least a 5 point likert scale
- If using a scale, define what each level of the scale means
- Repeat a scale if you continue beyond original page
- Take care in dealing with minority or subculture groups and with sensitive items
- Keep questions and corresponding answers on the same page
- Group similar response formats and themes together
- Consider what demographic information you need and how it will be useful
- Spacing and layout; easy to read, pleasant in appearance, indent answers separately from questions
- Consider use of graphics, words of encouragement, thank you at the end
- Do not use abbreviations

- Include blank space for respondents to provide more information if they choose an other category (ex: please specify:_____)
- Use judgment about using complex formats (if you answer no, go to #...)
- Pilot the instrument to get feedback and make adjustments before full implementation.

Analyzing and Using Data

The next step is to analyze and use the collected data. The analysis should focus on the purpose of the evaluation process. For example, if the evaluation purpose was to assess and monitor progress on identified outcomes, the analysis would examine the outputs, benchmarks and indicators for each outcome.

A variety of computer tools, such as Microsoft Excel, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and other databases are available for purchase to assist organizations in analyzing and interpreting data.

A key step to analyzing the data is turning the data into decision making. Analyzing the data provides insight into the services of the organization. Data enables organizations to identify where improvements are needed; determine how effective program changes improved services; recognize performance; encourage and motivate staff toward practice improvements; provide fiscal accountability, and improve public relations by providing information. The data is used for planning and quality assurance efforts.

Continuous quality assurance is defined as a process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and concerns, then testing, implementing, and learning from and revising solutions (National Child Welfare Resource Center and Casey Family Programs (2005). Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Improve Child Welfare Practice. Retrieved January 2007 at <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/CQIFramework.pdf>). The National Child Welfare Resource Center identifies the following five critical steps in establishing a quality assurance process (O'Brien, M. & Watson, P. (2002). Quality Assurance in Child Welfare. Retrieved January 2007 at <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/QA.pdf>)

1. Adopting standards
2. Incorporating quality assurance throughout your organization
3. gathering data and information
4. analyzing data and information
5. use your analysis for improvements

The following is additional information as adapted from Venango County's Collaborative Board Community Wide Performance Measurement and Outcomes Evaluation Process (October 2005) to assist in data analysis of data.

According to Poister (2003), there are four principles ways to analyze data. They are as follows:

Trends Over Time: Trend data allows an organization to compare itself to itself overtime. Because data are often tracked at regular intervals, trend analysis is a useful and easy way to gauge performance.

Comparisons Against Standards: Many health and human services indicators have best practice standards (see Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice) or industry benchmarks or accreditation processes that an organization can use to analyze its performance, or determine whether it is meeting expectations.

Comparisons Among Subunits: This type of analysis allows an organization to compare performance among work units (e.g., treatment teams) on a set of common measures to identify strengths and areas needing improvement.

External Benchmarking: External benchmarking allows an organization to compare its performance against a similar organization on a set of common measures.

Questions to consider in analyzing data:

1. Were the outcomes/objective implemented as specified? (treatment fidelity)
2. Is the data reliable and valid?
3. Is there a representative sample size?
4. Is there a difference when comparing the data to demographic information? (age, race, sex, location, etc.)
5. Are there substantial differences between current results and benchmarks?
6. What organizational strengths were identified?
7. What organizational areas for improvement were identified?
8. How can unusual or unexpected findings be explained?
9. What actions need to be taken as a result of the data?
10. Will the organization develop a program improvement plan to guide their actions? Who will be responsible to monitor the change plan, timelines, etc? (See Plan Section)
11. How can the data be used for strategic planning and quality assurance?
12. Can the information be generalized to other populations/services?
13. What actions should the agency take as a result of the data?

Disseminating Results

After performance data is collected and analyzed, it should be shared with appropriate stakeholders. The format depends on the intended audience. A report can be as brief as an executive summary of the evaluation process and findings or as elaborate as a comprehensive research paper with a literature review, organizational overview, evaluation design, evaluation instruments, evaluation findings including data tables and charts, data analysis, conclusions, and recommendations. The key in determining the report format is to ensure that it is clear, understandable, and meaningful to the intended audience whether it is staff, cross-systems partners, consumers of the service, and/or decision makers. The report should include enough information so that the evaluation process can be replicated either at another time by the organization or by a similar organization seeking similar information.

Some organizations, especially related to grants and foundations, require a specific format and identify report timelines.

Consider the following questions regarding the dissemination of the results of your evaluation process:

1. Who is the intended audience?
2. When is the information needed?
3. What has been committed to regarding the report?
4. Is there a required format?
5. What is the most effective way to communicate the information? (written summary, formal report, publication, presentation, etc.)
6. How does the reporting of progress relate to the overall communication plan developed earlier?
7. Can the information gathered be used to help build stewardship and create alignment among staff?
8. Can the information gathered be used for public relations purposes or to seek increased funding?
9. Are reports going to be given incrementally over time, as a “snapshot” at a particular time, or as a final result?
10. Who needs to approve the report before it is made public?
11. Who needs to “sponsor” the report? Whose signature is on it?

The use of an evaluation plan helps an organization use benchmarks and indicators to measure outcomes and improve services, ultimately benefiting the agency’s customers.

Evaluation Resources and Recommended Reading

Covey, Stephen R. (1991) *Principled centered leadership*. Fireside. (original work published 1990)

Fredericks, Carman, and Birkland. (no. 95, Fall, 2002). "Program evaluation in a challenging authoring environment: intergovernmental and interorganizational factors," *New Directions for Evaluation*.

Human Services Collaborative. (1996). Building Local Systems of Care: Strategically Managing Complex Change. (Adapted from T.Knosler (1991), TASH Presentations) Washington D.C.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, James R. Sanders, Chair. (1994). *The program evaluation standards: how to assess evaluations of educational programs, 2nd edition*. Sage Publications.

McNamara, Carter. (1997-2007). Pitfalls to Avoid, Adapted from the *Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation*. Retrieved May 28, 2007, from www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm

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