

# The Human Services Value Curve: A Holistic Approach

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Francisco Human Services Agency's Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAS) is working towards building a culture of inclusivity, compassion, innovation, accountability, and equity. San Francisco's DAS Department has the goal to deliver services in a way that honors its vision, mission, and core values. This case study is based on Solano County Health and Social Services' integration of the Human Services Value Curve and explores the Curve's potential implementation for San Francisco County's Human Services Agency and within DAS specifically. Solano County Health and Social Services (H&SS) adopted the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) national model, the Human Services Value Curve, which is a framework for improving human services business models to deliver better outcomes for communities. In June 2018, Solano County H&SS began developing its new mission, vision, and value statements. These values guide the agency's behavior and are centered in the culture the staff is trying to create. H&SS contracted with Performance Works, a

problem-solving consulting company, to help them effectively implement these changes and to build a more robust culture of community and belonging.

In March 2020, most of California was ordered to "shelter-in-place" for their safety due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. All counties are experiencing budget shortfalls due to this health crisis. Included in this case study are some suggestions for Solano County on how to keep momentum going with the department during these difficult times, such as transferring as much responsibility as possible to internal teams. The Human Services Values Curve program ideals could be implemented on a smaller scale in San Francisco. The county can create a DAS HUB-specific plan as a pilot, then build the Curve tool out to San Francisco Benefits Net/Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency Division (SFBN/ESSS) and the more extensive DAS programs as next steps. Moreover, San Francisco's Innovation Office is uniquely positioned to potentially implement the Human Service Value Curve model.

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## Introduction

San Francisco Human Services Agency's Department of Aging and Adult Services is working towards building a culture of inclusivity, compassion, innovation, accountability, and equity. San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAS) is always striving to improve processes, enhance internal and external communication, nurture relationships within the community, and create a more accountable and empowering environment for the staff. The department recently created new mission, vision, and value statements. A workgroup of various staff members came together and created "roadmaps to success." These roadmaps exist for each position and guide staff through the competencies of their jobs, spelling out benchmarks for years 1 to 2, 3 to 5, and 6 or beyond. Roadmaps are used in conjunction with performance evaluations and to assist in writing smart goals for each employee.

Thus, in 2020, the Solano County Health and Social Services Integration and the Human Services Value Curve provided a learning opportunity to explore its model, including the exploration of potential implementation and opportunities for bringing the model to San Francisco.

San Francisco's DAS Department goal is to deliver services in a way that honors its vision, mission, and core values. The Executive Management Team plans to demonstrate DAS's departmental core values each quarter through various activities that encourage engagement and promote internalization of the department's core values. A core value "roll out" committee was formed in [month/year]. Their goal was to develop creative ways to discuss, practice,

and implement the core values every quarter. The "roll out" consists of highlighting each value quarterly. Each month there is a different opportunity or activity to participate in practicing and implementing the value highlighted that quarter. Month one of the quarter is used to define the selected value. In month two, there is a fun activity everyone can participate in, and month three provides space to recognize one's coworkers performing the value in their daily work. Unfortunately, the rollout has been stalled due to the current health crisis. The department's goal before the shelter-in-place order was to roll out all values one by one each quarter; so far, we have successfully rolled out the core value of "inclusion." The core value workgroup created inclusion-promoting activities such as the "kudos wall," where staff recognize coworkers for being inclusive. The department's existing values may be further enhanced by considering additional types of values that are expressed through the Human Services Value Curve model.

## Solano County's Model

Solano County Health and Social Services (H&SS) recently adopted an American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) national business model for improving human services called the Human Services Value Curve, which promises to deliver better outcomes for the community. The Human Services Value curve consists of four levels of business models ranging from providing minimal client services ("just what is necessary") to a model that focuses on prevention strategies and broader support. The four levels of the business model are

as follows: (1) Regulative Business Model, (2) Collaborative Business Model, (3) Integrative Business Model, and (4) Generative Business Model.

The Regulative Business model serves as the baseline, providing what is required and no more. The Collaborative Business Model goes beyond the minimum of what is needed, encouraging staff to work across programs and provide the customers with referrals to other resources and services that may benefit the customer. The Integrative Model goes even further by addressing the root causes of client needs and problems by integrating the services provided. For example, consider a customer who applies for Cal-Fresh benefits through their local human services office due to loss of employment. During the application process, county staff may discover that the reason for the customer's loss of employment is due to their car needing repair. Thus, the human services professional can recommend that the individual apply to a diversion program that can provide one-time assistance for such circumstances. The customer has now received services for food *and* car repair to help get back to work. Finally, the Generative Business Model looks at the root causes of a problem at a population-wide scale, to provide solutions for socioeconomic challenges and opportunities within the community as a whole.

In June 2018, Solano County H&SS began developing new mission, vision, and value statements. From these statements, the leadership principles were formed, which include: equity, optimism, agility, communication, thoroughness, curiosity, delivering results, excellence, collaboration, partnership, commitment, and people skills. These values guide leadership behavior and are held at the core of the culture agency staff is trying to create. Solano County H&SS contracted with Performance Works, a problem-solving consulting company, to help them effectively implement these changes and to build a more robust culture of community and belonging. The staff intends this effort to make the principles of the Human Services Value Curve an essential part of their performance management, recruiting, and

employee orientation processes. Performance Works also guided staff to ensure that the direction for agency improvement would benefit both customers and line staff.

Solano County used various methods to gather information, compile results, and develop a plan of action in conjunction with Performance Works and the APHSA. Data was collected through staff and client surveys, focus groups, and executive team meetings. Newsletters solicited participation for various work groups such as "Leadership, Collaboration, and Decision Making," "New Employee Orientation Training," and "Health and Social Services Operations."

Solano County also partnered with APHSA to survey staff on how they view the agency, how they feel the agency is viewed by management, what they feel drives agency change, and how high staff knowledge is regarding the services provided countywide. The survey results demonstrated a need for training and better communication between service providers and a need for transparency in the agency's goal to move forward with the Human Services Value Curve. APHSA also provided a survey for program benefits participants asking them for suggestions on how to improve service delivery within the application and continuing benefits processes. The collaboration between staff and the community has allowed all parties involved to be part of this change process, which is one of the reasons Solano County H&SS has had success in implementing these enhancements in their service delivery both internally and externally.

The "Solano County Health and Social Services towards Service Integration Road Map" was developed with APHSA's guidance by a diverse group of staff in Solano County H&SS. This roadmap indicates eleven desired outcomes for improving communication internally and externally, decreasing silos, increasing cross-program collaboration, maintaining a welcoming environment for staff and community, and continually improving department services. For each outcome, the roadmap requires the

development of a strategy indicating actions to take, the responsible party for the actions, how responses will be measured, a time frame for completion, and the timeline for a status update. The roadmap is a tool that outlines essential steps and assists in keeping the plan on track.

### **Impact from COVID-19**

In March 2020, most of California was ordered to “shelter-in-place” for their safety due to COVID-19. Approximately two million people in California lost their jobs in April 2020 alone. California is currently facing a \$54 billion budget deficit. In an attempt to close the budget deficit gap, non-essential programs and activities have been cut. The Solano H&SS Integration and Human Services Curve Model program will be experiencing contract cuts with Performance Works and APHSA. Solano County will need to contend with the question of how best to continue the journey towards service integration and embodiment of their leadership principles.

### **Recommendations for Solano County**

Currently, we are all experiencing a health crisis, which is resulting in budget shortfalls for all counties. Solano County was contracting with Performance Works and APHSA for more than \$200,000 for both contracts annually. There is concern that the funding for the consulting work will not continue to be available. H&SS is three years into a five-year plan and does not want to lose momentum. Some suggestions might be to utilize a “train the trainer” model; to apply for a Cal-Fresh technology grant; and to possibly utilize the agency’s internal communications team to provide transparent communication with the staff. Using the “train the trainer” model is an excellent way to use the resources and staff already employed with Solano to cut costs and keep momentum going. Transferring as many responsibilities as possible to the internal team may save on costs. If possible, the county could also renegotiate the contracts to cover the bare minimum consultation necessary at a more sustainable cost.

### **Implications for San Francisco**

Solano County’s Human Services Values Curve program ideals could be implemented on a smaller scale in San Francisco. The county could begin by assessing San Francisco’s stage on the Human Services Value Curve, researching the issues, creating desired outcomes, and developing a change plan. Departments and programs within the county may be at different stages. It will be essential to determine where each department currently sits on the Human Services Value Curve model.

Some of the desired outcomes that could be adopted in San Francisco include improving external and internal communication with innovative technology, increasing cross-program collaboration, and investing in staff. Incorporating the Human Services Value Curve model in the foundation of the work we do allows us to begin considering the “whole person” rather than just the services. This model also aligns well with the Adult Disability Resource Center (ADRC) goals in San Francisco and statewide. A current recommendation is to have all ADRCs across the state trained in person-centered practices. County staff feel more invested in outcomes from the services we provide when we are considering each person holistically; this practice affirms the principle that each person is the expert in his or her own life.

I recommend providing “person-centric” training for all San Francisco County staff to begin focusing on the whole client rather than only the services we provide. For example, the county could create a process by which personnel are required to ask consumers transaction-specific questions after every service in order to provide additional services or referrals. A data tracking system could also be created, to ensure follow up is provided when needed. Lastly, another recommendation would be to create a cross-program resource and education committee that shares information, resources, and follow up activities with each team. Due to COVID-19 and emerging budgetary restraints in San Francisco, we could create a DAS HUB-specific plan as a pilot,

then build it out to the San Francisco Benefits Net/Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency Division (SFBN/ESSS) and the more extensive DAS programs as next steps. San Francisco's Innovation Office is uniquely positioned to potentially take on implementing the Human Service Value Curve model within our agency.

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