

Upstream Investments and Results-Based Accountability: Policy Recommendation for San Francisco

MELISSA MCGEE, MPA
The City and County of San Francisco

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sonoma County's *Upstream Investments* initiative can be a model for the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services' efforts to identify and implement shared outcomes for community-based programs. To measure the impact of programs and services, Sonoma's Human Services Department uses a shared measurement process to maximize collective impact in their work through Results-Based Accountability (RBA). RBA training is provided to county and community staff. Once an agency enters into a contract with the county, the parties collaboratively develop performance measures to evaluate impact.

This program offers San Francisco a method to evaluate shared outcomes. The Dignity Fund legislation states that the Service and Allocation Plan (SAP) must be outcome-oriented, include goals, measurable objectives, and outcomes, and that evaluation is completed on a regular basis. The outcome measures included in the SAP informed through the Dignity Fund Community Needs Assessment (DFCNA) process should include core objectives tracked over the four-year cycles. These core objectives are evaluated during each cycle to determine systemic improvement over time.

Melissa McGee, MPA, Program Manager
San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging
Services, Office of Community Partnerships

Introduction

A review of Sonoma County's *Upstream Investments* initiative offers an opportunity for San Francisco to model a similar program to measure outcomes across programs. This policy recommendation can assist the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS) in working towards the development of shared outcomes across community partners through a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) effort.

Sonoma County's Human Services Department has the responsibility of supporting the health, safety, and well-being of individuals, families, and the community. The programs and services of the Department benefit over 100,000 older adults, veterans, adults, teens, children, and people with disabilities. To measure the impact of programs and services, the Human Services Department operates the *Upstream Investments* initiative. *Upstream Investments* uses a shared measurement process to maximize collective impact in their work through RBA. The effort began in 2020, and over the next five years, the County will be working towards including RBA in all safety net department contracts with community-based organizations.

The San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services (SF DAS) has begun discussing the process of shared outcomes and using outcomes across similar community partners to determine the impact in certain areas. Sonoma County's *Upstream Investments* model can assist SF DAS to accomplish this goal.

The *Upstream Investments* initiative focuses on prevention across the life span. Although DAS provides services to older adults and

adults with disabilities, there is an opportunity to assist older adults to age in place and people with disabilities to maximize services and level of independence.

Background

Sonoma County *Upstream Investments* was initially a response to costs in their criminal justice system. They were concerned with the level of funding in the criminal justice system and how this continued to grow. There was interest in addressing the criminal justice pipeline and efforts on prevention earlier in the life span. In 2007, this idea was conceived and in 2008, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors chartered the *Upstream Investments* initiative.

Sonoma County conducted extensive research and data gathering to determine the course of action to address this initiative. Beginning in 2018, community providers seeking to contract with Sonoma County were required to participate in training on RBA. The County worked with a consultant to provide training both to county staff as well as contracted providers. The project began with one volunteer community-based organization that went through the process of training and identifying performance measures to include in the contract. In 2022, RBA is included in all new procurements with Sonoma County.

Impact

The use of RBA in Sonoma County contracts with community providers is becoming the norm. It is part of the culture of providing services in the county. This process extends to all county departments serving the lifespan of individuals. At this point, all internal staff and community

providers who oversee RBA contracts are required to attend training on RBA. Once entered into a contract, performance measures are identified that will be used over the term of the contract. The provider and the county agree upon these measures. Prior to an agreement, it is determined and confirmed that the data method and information are relevant and measurable.

Data collection and analysis provide a framework for decision-making. Key indicators are identified and are used to make decisions on effective programming, funding, and outcome success for consumers. The county uses a collective impact approach supporting a common community agenda, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities. Identifying shared measurements assists in effective strategies to guide investments through this common agenda, long-term impact, and tracking of positive outcomes.

Recommendations for San Francisco

RBA offers the opportunity to analyze and evaluate shared outcomes across DAS programs, asking the questions, “How much did we do?” “How well did we do it?” and “Is anyone better off?” These population and performance measures can assist in community program planning. The Dignity Fund (DF) legislation outlines a process by which SF DAS completes a planning cycle every four years. Year one of the planning cycle is the completion of a community needs assessment (DFCNA). This DFCNA informs the Service and Allocation Plan (SAP), which outlines funding priorities over the four-year contracting cycle. The DFCNA includes an equity and gaps analysis and is representative of a cross-section of stakeholders.

The DF legislation states that the SAP must be outcome-oriented, include goals, measurable objectives, and outcomes, and that evaluation is completed on a regular basis. RBA suggests that the question is to determine our results statement based on the DF legislation and the key indicators to revisit in the next four-year cycle. RBA offers insight into systemic changes, improvements, and gaps, rather than individual or single agency outcomes.

The outcome measures included in the SAP, based on data collection and analysis during the DFCNA process, should include core points that can be tracked over the four-year cycles. These core points are measured throughout the term of the community partner contract and at annual assessment (or more frequently depending on the design of the tool and agreed-upon timelines). Core objectives should be tracked each cycle to determine systemic improvement over time, not just in an isolated four-year cycle.

Sonoma County enters into a contract with community providers, and once in contract, work together to determine performance measures. These measures are then included as an addendum to their contract. The SF DAS process is that service and outcome objectives are part of the contract negotiation process prior to finalizing the contract. Both parties enter into a contract with an agreement on the expectations for the measurement of outcomes. This process should continue as is, with those performance measures rooted in RBA. Sonoma County stresses collaboration on metric development that is mutually beneficial, and this goal can work with the SF DAS process.

The current process born out of the DF legislation and the four-year cycle lends itself well to the introduction of RBA into contracts beginning with the new fiscal year.

RBA population and performance measures could be included in new fiscal year contracts and progress evaluated at the end of the four-year cycle. SF DAS has just completed the DFCNA and will be developing the next SAP. This is an opportune time to pilot RBA in community partner contracts. Sonoma County was successful in beginning the inclusion of RBA into their contracts by starting with a volunteer community partner. SF DAS can solicit a community partner(s) who will pilot this process while providing training, the inclusion of RBA measures identified collaboratively, and the determination of data collection processes that effectively measure the indicators, which could be used across programs to provide aggregate data information on shared measures.

Next Steps

San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services is at an appropriate point to introduce RBA into the outcomes evaluation process. The beginning of the new SAP and resulting community partner contracts with the new fiscal year is timely. The next steps would be to identify willing community partner(s) to pilot with SF DAS. Training and coaching on RBA would be provided to internal staff as well as community partners. Sonoma County used Clear Impact as a consultant when beginning the process of RBA with the community providers. As this consultant is an expert in RBA, it would also benefit San Francisco to engage the company to provide training and technical support as SF DAS embarks on this effort.

Should the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services decide to adopt RBA as a shared outcome measurement tool, Sonoma County has moved through this process and would be an

excellent resource for insights, training, brainstorming, and assistance.

Sonoma County plans to move forward in its *Upstream Investments* and RBA processes by integrating equity and embedding anti-racist principles into all contracts.

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