Glossary & Getting Started – Outcomes, Indicators, Performance

As we move forward with your Goals together, we need to share a common language and understanding. This Guide has been added to clarify and define terms we use in referring to the dashboard and give some guidance and direction to starting your own MIMs Dashboard.

COMMON LANGUAGE FOR OUR DASHBOARD

Dashboard: A software-based solution that transforms sets of data into easy-to-read charts of key performance data that all audiences can understand.

Outcome: The conditions of well-being we want for children, families, and the county as a whole. *An outcome is a population condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities, stated in plain language. These are conditions that voters and taxpayers can understand.*

Indicator: How we measure these conditions. *An indicator is a measure that helps quantify the achievement of an outcome. Indicators answer the question: "How would we recognize the outcome if we fell over it?"* It is usually something beyond what we have direct operational control over.

Baseline: The measure of where we've been and where we are. *Baselines have two parts: the historical data that tells where we've been and the current snapshot of where we are.*

Initiative: What works to improve these conditions? *An initiative is a coherent collection of actions that has a reasoned chance of improving results. Initiatives are made up of our best thinking about what works, and include the contributions of many partners.*

Target: A specific goal for an indicator or performance measure. *It should have a relationship to quality service or quality of life conditions.*

Performance measure: How we know if strategies are working. *They answer the question "How are we doing?"* It is usually something that we have operational control over.

Using This Framework to Develop Outcomes and Indicators

Here are some concepts to consider as you review the outcomes and indicators we developed with your input:

- Outcomes:
    - The Future We Choose: Building Healthy Communities - We linked each outcome, where possible, to an initiative already underway and intended to impact that outcome.
    - Thinking about the causes of a condition precedes thinking about solutions to improve the condition. Outcomes, therefore, do not reference a specific service or program. Strategies, targets and performance measures can reference services.
    - Data statements are indicators, not outcomes. We do not use the words improve, increase, decrease.

- Indicators:
    - Communication Power: Does the indicator communicate to a broad and diverse audience? If you had to stand in a public square and explain the outcome to your neighbors, what two or three pieces of data would you use?
    - Proxy Power: Does the indicator say something of central importance about the outcome?
    - Data Power: Do we have quality data on a timely basis? Is the data reliable and consistent?

Answering these questions helped define the outcomes and the indicators:

Step 1: What are the quality of life conditions we want for the children, adults and families who live in the County? (The Future We Choose: Building Healthy Communities) (Outcome)

Step 2: What would these conditions look like if we could see or experience them? (Indicator)

OUR NEXT STEPS: BASELINE AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The next step is to determine the baseline for our data and performance measures you will want to report in the Dashboard. We will work with the cross-functional teams to ask these questions, and our exercises today will help as well.

Step 3: How will we measure these conditions? (Baseline)

Step 4: What are we working to achieve? How will you move the needle? (Target)

Step 5: How are we doing on the most important measures? This is the graphic depiction of our progress that will be on the dashboard. (Performance measures)

These are examples of clear and common targets and performance measures:
- Increase children in full-day kindergarten to 99% by 2017-18
- Increase number of rides made on to 107 rides per capita annually
- Increase percentage of County employees who respond positively to engagement questions from 64% to 67% by January 2016

These are questions you can ask to develop the targets and performance measures. Note that you will need to collect (or have already) data to use as a baseline and measure, and that they are directly tied to the indicators.

How much did we do?
- Customers served (by customer characteristic)
- Activities undertaken (by type of activity)

How well did we do it?
- Activity-specific measures

Is anyone better off?
- Changes in skills/knowledge
- Changes in attitude/opinion
- Changes in behavior
- Changes in circumstance