



STATE OF LOUISIANA SOCIAL SERVICES RESULTS TEAM

Outcome Based Budgeting Request for Results

Safe and Thriving Children and Families

Outcome Goal Statement

I want self-sufficient families and healthy and safe Louisianans.

Families and individuals should be able to meet their basic needs and be empowered to become self-reliant. Children should be in safe and stable homes and safe when they are cared for in community settings. We will invest early in the well-being of children to ensure their successful development. And when children and families are in crisis we will link them to a coordinated system of care to effectively meet their needs and set them on a path towards independence.

Indicators

Respondents should provide the performance measures and the targets to be reached in support of improving the indicators discussed below.

Indicator 1: Percentage of children ages 0-5 who exhibit positive child-well-being

Child well-being includes physical, social and cognitive development from birth. Research indicates that there are five critical domains to the well-being of young children including:

- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development
- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language Development
- Cognition and General Knowledge

Possible performance measures:

- *% of children ages 0-5 with age-appropriate developmental skills*
- *Rate of substantiated abuse or neglect for children ages 0-5*
- *% of young children who often or very often exhibit positive social behaviors when interacting with their peers*
- *% of children almost always recognizing the relationships between letters and sounds by age five*

Indicator 2: Percentage of citizens who are self-sufficient.

Key factors in a safe, healthy and thriving Louisiana include advances in workforce development, economic development and education. Poverty among Louisiana's citizens has historically hampered improvements in these areas which in turn has itself contributed to the long term incidence of poverty and hampered the ability of citizens to become self reliant. Promoting self sufficiency is one of the greatest challenges facing Louisiana and services must be grounded in knowledge about the causes and consequences of poverty. An understanding of improvements in rates of citizens becoming self reliant and moving out of poverty, or avoid falling into poverty, relies on an appreciation of citizens' workforce participation, income levels, public assistance utilization, and educational attainment. These may be measured through:

- *% of individuals who leave Family Assistance and remain off of Family Assistance for 12 months (Family Assistance includes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Childcare Assistance Program, Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program)*
- *High school graduation rates for youth aging out of foster care*
- *Work participation rate for public assistance beneficiaries*

Indicator 3: Percentage of children in safe, stable home settings.

The safety and well-being of some children are threatened by unsafe environments, child abuse and neglect, and lack of access to basic needs such as housing, nutrition and healthcare. A safe and stable home is critical to the positive development and future success of a child. Key measures of the rate of children living in safe, stable homes include:

- *Rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect among children (including subset indicator of those from birth to age 6)*
- *% of children (including subset indicator of birth to age 6) in out-of-home placement (foster care) who have no more than two placements in a 24-month period*
- *% of children that were not maltreated while in Foster Care*
- *% of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year round employment*

Introduction of Key Factors

Primary Factor 1: Stable Homes

To help ensure the safety, security, and well-being of the children and families of Louisiana, it is imperative that children live in safe and stable homes, whether family or community homes. Key drivers of safe, stable homes include:

1. Adequate Housing

Inadequate or a lack of permanent housing has a negative impact on children and families' health, safety, and well-being. Families with high housing costs are more likely to go without other basic necessities in order to pay for rent and utilities. Children in unstable living conditions are more likely to repeat a grade and to drop out of school before graduating. Children that are homeless or living in inadequate housing are more likely to get sick, develop behavioral health issues, fall behind academically or become victims of violence than their peers.

2. Safe Environment

Unintentional injuries and violence are the leading cause of death for children ages 1-18 and many of those injuries are preventable. Environments should be free of violence within the home and outside of the home. An environment free of abuse and neglect while at the same time providing safe living conditions is one in which children and families may thrive. Safe and healthy shelter is essential to a person's physical, psychological social and economic well-being.

3. Health

Children and families that are healthy are physically and emotionally strong. Lack of good health can negatively affect cognitive, emotional behavioral or physical development, sometimes with long-term consequences. Parental substance abuse and mental illness create additional risk factors impacting safety and security in homes.

4. Food

Food is essential to prevent hunger, meet the basic needs of families and increase family nutrition levels. Malnourished children are less likely to be successful in school and are more likely to present additional health challenges. Low-income families who do not have the resources to obtain necessary food are at greater risk of instability.

5. Jobs

By some estimates, up to 750,000 Louisianians are not fully engaged in the workforce, greatly limiting their opportunities and standard of living and making them more likely to require government support. Without income, families face higher stress levels, may be at risk of losing housing or unable to meet their basic needs. Jobs providing sustainable income are essential in the development of stable homes and contribute to a strong economy.

Primary Factor 2: Thriving Children

Education, health and strong social-emotional development are essential to ensuring thriving children. Children must have opportunities to get the best start in life through a quality early childhood. They must have the opportunity to live in safe and stable home and community-based settings.

1. Physical, Social and Emotional Development

Providing supportive relationships and safe environments can improve outcomes for all children, but especially those who are most vulnerable. This requires promoting the physical, social and emotional development of children that includes such factors as health status, growth, and disabilities; physical abilities, such as gross and fine motor skills; and conditions before, at, and after birth as well as children's ability to interact with others and their capacity for self-regulation.

2. Stable Families

Children need a stable, loving family environment in order to thrive. Research has demonstrated that a stable home environment promotes security, self-esteem, and confidence, providing a critical foundation for their success. It is important that all available resources are identified and utilized to ensure a family's stability including child support, child care, among others.

3. Safety

Policies and programs that support the ability of parents, primary caretakers, providers of early care and education, and others to interact positively with children in safe and stimulating environments help create a sturdy foundation for later school achievement and personal success. Children who have been neglected or physically or sexually abused are more likely to have cognitive and emotional problems. Abuse and neglect are strongly linked with many negative outcomes for children including poor school performance, frequent grade retention, juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy. Children are most at risk of maltreatment if their families are overwhelmed by multiple problems such as inadequate income, lack of a job, inadequate housing, emotional stress, drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness or domestic violence. It is critical to ensure that children are both safe in their homes and safe in out-of-home placements which can include child day care

centers, foster homes and residential facilities. Consistent application of best practice and regulatory monitoring of these settings is important to promote safety.

4. Cognitive Skills

As Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child reports, "Ensuring that children have positive experiences prior to entering school is likely to lead to better outcomes than remediation programs at a later age, and significant up-front costs can generate a strong return on investment. Cost-benefit studies have demonstrated positive returns on high-quality programs for vulnerable children beginning as early as prenatally and as late as age 4." Research demonstrates that long-term cognitive and behavioral impacts from early intervention can have positive impacts for at-risk infants and toddlers. Connecting disadvantaged and disconnected youth with school and preparing them for employment is essential to their development.

Primary Factor 3: Self-Reliant Individuals

The most effective, direct strategy to move individuals and households towards self sufficiency and out of poverty away from the many resulting negative social and economic consequences requires investments in a system of stabilization and workforce development that promotes independence. Workforce participation is critical to an individual's success. As individuals transition from being unemployed to early employment, a career path, and long-term self-sufficiency, a system of basic supports can allow them continued employment and the ability to move away from such supports through advancement in their career. Just as the reasons for poverty are complex and interconnected, programs should be interconnected / coordinated to address both the prevention of individuals and families from slipping into poverty and supporting those living in poverty in their efforts to increase self-sufficiency.

1. Job Skills/Supports

Weak education and training of many Louisiana workers limits their earnings and imposes great costs—not only on themselves but on the economy as well. These costs include low productivity, low employment, and high crime. It is crucial that individuals access needed vocational training and supports to not only obtain employment but to sustain this. Often the difference between dependence and independence hinges on a transition period of supports such as child care and transportation services. Research shows that regular payments of child support are associated with lower incidence of public assistance utilization and higher incidence of employment for custodial parents.

Individuals with at least a high school graduation are more likely to succeed than those without. Preventing at-risk students from dropping out and assisting them and others with attaining a high school diploma is critical to their future success. Additional vocational training and education (especially targeted at high demand sector jobs) further the opportunities for individuals to become self sufficient.

2. Career Ladder

A career path can help an individual become more independent in meeting needs. And a career begins with a job. As individuals with no or limited experience or opportunities in the workforce gain employment, additional attention can focus on helping them work in jobs that afford the opportunity for advancement in skills and income. Long-term career progression pathways help individuals advance, particularly in high wage, high growth careers. Career ladders are not a training program or model, but a system for organizing and delivering career education on a lifelong basis. Unlike traditional training programs targeted to a particular population or job, career ladders are based on the belief that training and work opportunities must be geared to individuals at all levels of skills, readiness and experience.

3. Economic Security

Economic security includes the amount of income a family needs to meet basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their community, and save for future needs and goals. Basic needs include food, housing, child care, transportation, health care, clothing, household and personal expenses, and insurance. Increased economic security is an important basic step toward a poverty eradication strategy, allowing individuals to meet the basic needs of their families without suffering critical hardship and without dependence on government assistance.

4. Assets

Broadly defined, assets are investments that appreciate over time such as savings or a home. To be economically secure, families need both income and assets. Regular income helps families pay for their daily living expenses. Assets provide a safety net for coping with unanticipated expenses and emergencies (e.g., unemployment, accidents, and illnesses) that could otherwise cause significant financial hardship. Building assets is critical for families to remain self sufficient over time and avoid hardships that could otherwise push them towards poverty and dependence.

The following additional factors also contribute to safe and thriving children and families. The team has identified these factors as less critical to achieving outcomes as compared to the factors described above; however they are important to the overall discussion. The factors are reflected in the cause and effect map below and include the following:

- Engaged community
- Strong economy
- Quality education

Cause-and-Effect Map



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Purchasing Strategies

To make significant progress toward the goal of self-sufficient families and healthy and safe Louisianans, we are looking for budget proposals that:

1. Promote safe and developmentally appropriate settings for all children.
2. Apply and prioritize early childhood interventions based on carefully evaluated risk assessments.
3. Ensure coordinated systems of care for at-risk children and their families.
4. Provide opportunities and support for families to meet their basic needs through increased economic security.

5. Empower people and families to become more independent.

Criteria

We are seeking offers for programs and services that strategically target the primary factors and result in safe and thriving children and families as described in this Request for Results (30% of points).

Specifically, we are seeking offers that:

- contribute to safe and stable homes for children and families including reducing incidence of neglect and abuse of children in their homes or community settings
- contribute to the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children so that they may be better prepared to begin school and take advantage of educational opportunities
- contribute to a stronger economic environment that provides greater opportunities for individuals and families to become self reliant through earning a living wage, attaining an education, and other activities that may also reduce the need for public assistance

We are seeking offers that are data-driven and able to demonstrate results supporting the desired outcomes described in this Request for Results. (25% of points)

Specifically, we are seeking offers that are grounded in best or promising practices research, successful experiences and models, or similar data. Further, offers should demonstrate that results will be measurable and relate directly to the desired outcomes.

We are seeking offers that demonstrate a streamlined approach to service delivery and leverage resources. (20% of points)

Specifically, we are seeking offers that demonstrate a more efficient manner of delivering services that will result in improved outcomes and/or cost savings. Further, offers should indicate how resources (funding, personnel, etc) will be leveraged through private or public sector sources.

We are seeking offers that are client centered and demonstrate services are accessible to all potential clients. (15% of points)

Specifically, we are seeking offers that can demonstrate how services focus on the needs and capacities of clients including the client's ability to access a full range of services included in the offer.

We are seeking offers that create strong community-based collaboration and investment resources (dollars, people, etc.) that may include state, local, non-governmental, and community partnership with mutual goals and commitment. (10% of points)

Specifically, we are seeking offers that demonstrate direct collaboration among a variety of partners to better serve clients through common goals and coordinated resources.

Supporting Evidence

- *Promoting Self-Sufficiency for Louisiana's Citizens: A Framework for Strategic Investments (Louisiana Department of Social Services, July 28, 2009) available <http://www.dss.louisiana.gov>*
 - One of the most challenging and important tasks facing state policymakers is to choose wisely among a mix of strategies that address the developmental, social, and basic economic needs of our most vulnerable individuals and families. This framework enables the department to make strategic investments that promote self sufficiency for individuals and families.
- *Center for Economic Opportunity: Strategy and Implementation Report (NYC CEO, December 2007)*
 - This report details the Center for Economic Opportunity's design and implementation of a range of programs fulfilling recommendations from New York City's Commission for Economic Opportunity which worked to develop a strategic poverty reduction agenda for low-income households and individuals.
- *Early Experience Matters: A Guide to Improved Policies for Infants and Toddlers (Zero to Three- A National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, 2009)*
 - This report provides an overview of some of the most compelling evidence for investing in and implementing a comprehensive infant and toddler policy agenda including the following:
- *Getting Ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17 State Partnership (2005) Sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Kauffman Foundation and the Ford Foundation and Prepared by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT*
 - The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: Making Progress for Young Children was a multi-state initiative that developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age 8. The goal was for states to use the school readiness indicators to inform public policy decisions and track progress in meeting key goals for young children.
- *Financing Quality Rating Systems: Lessons Learned (Alliance for Early Childhood Finance, United Way Success by Six, 2004)*
 - This report describes the process of developing and financing Quality Rating Systems for early childhood programs. The report analyzes nine statewide quality systems and provides best practice/lessons learned from these experiences.
- *Better Beginnings: The State of Early Learning and Kindergarten Readiness in East Yakima and White Center (Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., 2008)*

- In its strategy document, “Investing in Children: An Early Learning Strategy for Washington,” the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation identified six key demographic risk factors that put significant numbers of Washington state children at a disadvantage when they enter kindergarten, such as living in poverty and living with a single parent or no parent. This report provides an assessment of interventions employed in select communities in Washington State as well as provides a foundation for assessing the outcomes of early childhood programs and interventions.
- *Medicaid Managed Care for Children in Child Welfare, Issue Brief April, 2008 (Kamala Allen, MHS, Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc.)*
 - This issue brief examines the complex physical and behavioral health care needs and associated costs for children in child welfare and outlines critical opportunities and challenges within Medicaid to better manage care for this high-risk, high-cost population.
- *Using the California Self-Sufficiency Standard in Practice: Ideas for Organizations and Public Agencies Working to Help Families Move Out of Poverty (2004) National Economic Development and Law Center*
 - This report was produced as part of the Californians for Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (CFESS) project, a statewide coalition managed by NEDLC. CFESS focuses on program and policy change that helps families move from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. Through CFESS, NEDLC publishes the California Self-Sufficiency Standard, and promotes the adoption of the Standard by nonprofit organizations, public agencies and foundations.
- *Society at a Glance 2009: OECD Social Indicators (OECD 2009)*
 - Today the various issues of *Society at a Glance* provide rich information on social conditions in different OECD countries and on the measures taken to improve them. A sub-set of headline indicators gives a clearer representation of social conditions. This sub-set serves an important communication function, rapidly alerting users to some of the critical challenges in the social field confronting various OECD countries, and highlighting comparative progress. This report presents the headline indicators as an integral part of *Society at a Glance* and describes the approach used to select and construct the set of headline social indicators.
- *Child Support Enforcement: Net Impacts on Work & Welfare Outcomes pre- & post-PRWORA (2000), Washington State Division of Child Support, available <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/esa/dcs/reports/csepolicybrief.pdf>*
 - This brief highlights the effects of child support payments on public assistance in Washington State in the pre and post welfare reform environment.