

MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager
Date: September 23, 2016
Subject: Human Services Outcomes Measurement

During the City Council Goal-Setting Session held in January 2016, the City Council adopted an objective to develop an outcomes measurement system to assist in determining the City's funding allocations to human service agencies. This objective has two tasks:

Task 1 – City staff will communicate the Council's interest in this new measurement system with the other ASSET funders and report back to the Council their level of interest in implementing this new measurement system.

Task 2 – Staff will provide a report to the City Council identifying various models that currently exist to measure outcomes.

Staff has communicated the Council's interest in using an outcomes measurement system with other ASSET staff, thereby completing Task 1. This year, United Way of Story County (UWSC) began implementing an outcomes measurement system called the Clear Impact Scorecard. This is an internet-based tool for establishing measurements, recording progress, and retrieving data. UWSC has indicated to the agencies it funds that they will need to work towards using the Scorecard to track their measurements. Doing so will become a requirement of UWSC's agency agreements beginning in July 2017.

UWSC will be meeting with each agency to first determine the types of data that the agency has the capability of measuring. UWSC will then work with the agencies to develop additional metrics as needed. Data for some initial measurements has already been incorporated into the system to provide a historical perspective. Once the profile of outcomes to be tracked has been established, the agencies can add notes to the information to indicate major changes in how a service is delivered, with the intent that that information can be used to identify whether the outcomes improved as a result of the change. When multiple agencies report on the same outcomes, the information can be viewed independently or aggregated together by UWSC.

UWSC will be asking agencies to provide updated outcomes data each month. It is UWSC's intent to share the information collected with other ASSET funders to identify where funding

will be the most effective to create change for human services clients. Additionally, it is hoped that agencies will use the information to show the results of their efforts to clients and donors.

UWSC has purchased licenses for all its partner agencies to use the Clear Impact Scorecard, plus the Ames, Huxley, and Nevada Public Libraries, which conduct programs related to grade-level reading. UWSC receives a discount from Clear Impact due to its work related to grade-level reading. Each license therefore costs \$285 for this year. Each year, the license must be renewed at the rate offered by Clear Impact. Some agencies already have licenses, due to their work with United Way of Central Iowa. In total, UWSC has obtained 33 licenses. UWSC has also contracted for 15 hours of technical assistance in this first year to better understand the features offered by the Scorecard.

UWSC staff has expressed interest in having the City and other ASSET funders use the information from the Clear Impact Scorecards to assist with funding decisions in a coordinated manner. Although the City Council has requested a report identifying other methods to measure outcomes, it may be more effective for the City to partner with United Way on its measurement system rather than creating an independent outcomes measuring system, which would create an additional reporting burden for agencies.

Details about the Clear Impact Scorecard can be found at: <https://clearimpact.com/scorecard/>. If the City Council would like more information from United Way regarding this initiative, the Council could invite UWSC staff to present information at a future City Council meeting. Alternatively, if the City Council would like to evaluate other options to measure outcomes, it would be appropriate for the City Council to provide further direction to City staff to do so.